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ABSTRACT

This document contains speeches, panel discussions, and audience reactions from a seminar on school-community relations. The material is designed to broaden the understanding of superintendents, central office administrators, and public information personnel on the importance of soundly conceived programs for school-community relations. (JF)

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Seminar on

School - Community Relations

September 25, 1969

Holiday Inn East

Indianapolis, Indiana

A Publication of ----

The Indiana Public School Study Council

---- January, 1970

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FOREWORD

The Seminar on School-Community Relations held on September 25 at the Holiday Inn East, Indianapolis was sponsored by the Indiana Public School Study Council. All planning for the Seminar was done by a group of specialists in public relations from among the nineteen member school systems of the Council. The Seminar was an outgrowth of a meeting and subsequent discussions among public information personnel from Council Schools.

The Seminar was designed to broaden the understanding of superintendents, central office administrators, public information personnel and others who attended, relative to the importance of soundly conceived programs for school-community relations. The Seminar was very well attended. Council representatives in attendance have reported that the Seminar was timely, relevant and highly beneficial. The Planning Committee was commended for the high quality of the Seminar. Particular comment was made concerning the resource persons utilized. All were excellent.

The Planning Committee was headed by Dr. Ross Sharp, Director of Personnel and Community Relations of the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation. He was assisted by Mrs. Elizabeth Trimpe, Coordinator of Public Relations, Vigo County School Corporation. Mr. Henry Lohse, Director of Community Relations, MSD of Warren Township; Mr. Jim Rady, Director of Public Relations, Anderson Public Schools and Mr. Mike Alexander, Director of Informational Services of the Monroe County Community Schools. The Committee is to be commended for the fine work done.

The Resource Consultant for the Seminar was Mr. Ned Hubbell, President of Ned Hubbell and Associates, Public Relations Counselors. Mr. Hubbell was

extremely well received. He proved to be a most stimulating, realistic, practical and challenging authority. Ned Hubbell was augmented by Dr. Richard Gray, Chairman of the Journalism Department of Indiana University and by Mr. Herbert W. Hoover of the Board of School Trustees of the Bartholomew Consolidated Schools. Both presentations were excellent. Several superintendents and other professional staff members from Council member school systems served as panel members and reactors. We are indebted to all for making the Seminar on School-Community Relations one of the most valuable activities ever sponsored by the Council.

This report contains the presentations and reactions given during the Seminar. All sessions were recorded. The tapes were then transcribed, edited and reproduced. We hope that the report will be of help to those who are concerned with School-Community relationships.

Merle T. Strom, Editor and
Executive Secretary

Indiana Public School Study Council

SEMINAR ON SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Holiday Inn - East
Indianapolis, Indiana

Thursday, September 25, 1969

9:30 a.m.

Arrival and Coffee Hour

10:00 a.m.

Opening Remarks — Dr. Ross Sharp, Chairman, Seminar Planning Committee

Welcome — Dr. Russell Hiatt, IPSSC President, Superintendent, Lafayette Schools

10:30 a.m.

Lunch — Holiday Inn - East

1:00 p.m.

Workshop Session in School P.R. (CONPAR) — Ned Hubbell, Presiding

"What's in it for Me?" - Implications For School Administrators

Panel Members:

Ronald E. Walton, Superintendent
Monroe County Community School Corporation

Mrs. Elizabeth Trimpe
Coordinator of Public Relations
Vigo County School Corporation
and
President, Indiana School Public Relations Association

O. T. White, Principal
Madison Heights Jr. High School
Anderson, Indiana

3:00 p.m.

Coffee Break

3:30 p.m.

"WHY SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS?"

Views by a Journalist	Dr. Richard Gray, Chairman Journalism Department Indiana University
Reactor	Dr. Clarence Robbins, Supt. Bartholomew Cons. School Corp.

Questions and Comments from Members of the Audience

Views by a School Board Member	Herbert W. Hoover, Member Board of School Trustees Bartholomew Consolidated Schools
Reactor	Austin Walker, Superintendent MSD Warren Township

Questions and Comments from Members of the Audience

5:30 p.m.

Break for Dinner

6:00 p.m.

Dinner	Holiday Inn - East

7:00 p.m.

"IS ANYBODY LISTENING?"	Ned Hubbell

8:00 p.m.

Adjournment

MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dr. Ross Sharp, Director
Personnel/Community Relations
Bartholomew Cons. School Corp.
Mrs. Elizabeth Trimpe
Coordinator of Public Relations
Vigo County School Corporation
Henry Lohse, Director of Community Relations
MSD Warren Township
Jim Rady, Director of Public Relations
Anderson Public Schools
Mike Alexander, Director
Informational Services
Monroe County Community Schools

WHAT IS SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS?

Mr. Ned Hubbell, President
Ned Hubbell and Associates
Public Relations Counselors

I guess our assignment this morning is to do our best to keep as interesting as possible. I asked Ross if I could please have a chalkboard, because this is the first fall in the last four years since we have had our firm that I have not taught a class somewhere part time, and I feel a little flustered; so, everywhere I go I ask to be provided with a chalkboard. What I would like to do is provide a frame of reference for why we feel like we do. I would like to look at situations from the general public's point of view, from the administrator's point of view, and from the audience's side, which is most important.

I would like to tell you very briefly what I think school public relations is, and what it is not; what it can hopefully do, and what it cannot do. Therein lies a tale that ought to take about six weeks, but we'll try to quickly brush by and give you a wind swept lesson of those four characteristics and concerns.

I used to apologize for coming from Michigan because we have demonstrated in public education in the last four years probably all of the mistakes that can be made and their results, plus the after effects of collective bargaining. We are famous, or notorious, for a series of labor day crises. I am privileged to report to you that now sophistication seems to be arriving to our state. We have had fewer teacher strikes than in any of the previous three years. I also quit apologizing for Michigan after Miss America was selected.

Let's get on to what we are most concerned with; what we know so little about and what the public keeps telling us they wish we would devote more attention to. That is the business of school-community relations. It has always been with us, but nowadays it seems to be more complicated than it used to be.

I must confess that as a high school teacher I couldn't avoid the lure of the microphone so I left teaching and went into radio. I was in radio news and then went back in the public school system when it lost three successive bond issues, had recall petitions for the superintendent, and when the newsmen refused to accept any reports from the administrative offices because they didn't believe them. The system has quite an image. At that time the school board said what they needed was a public relations program. They had one, but they wanted a different kind.

I think most school community relations programs are born out of some kind of adversity. This is not only true for education but also business. The PR movement began with the muckrackers, who attached big business at the turn of this century. Vanderbilt is alleged to have said, "The public be damned"; and then the roof caved in. He quickly hired a press agent, who slowly developed the process of public relations to make large corporations like railroads, banks and the steel industry look better in the eyes of the public. So our counterparts in business and industry started in the same way that we started in Port Huron. We had problems so we had to start solving them.

I thought that after eight years with the school system, finally passing a few bond issues and timing things so that the people and climate were set right, I knew what public relations was. Then we moved, and I became a full time parent in a Chicago suburb. I finally discovered what

public relations really was the day I enrolled my kids in a brand new school for the first time.

May I indicate what school public relations really is by relating a real life experience of a couple of friends of mine. You know what it is like when you move. This was a new experience to us. We had never done this before. My kids had always gone to the same school in the same town all their lives; and there they were, one in the fourth grade, and one in the eighth grade on a cold wintry day. I'm a great planner, I moved them right in the middle of the school year, temperature 10 below zero, and three days before they were going to be dismissed for Christmas. We figured we had to get them in there then or they would be lonely sitting around by themselves during Christmas time. We marched the eighth grader in first because the junior high started sooner than the elementary.

Both schools had been called two months in advance and had been warned the Hubbell kids were coming. They had sent for the cumulative record folders. They were ready. They knew this was the date and in we walked.

I guess I expected a band would be there, a tour guide, and all the things that are done for bewildered, frightened adolescent children and nervous, anxious fathers. It was just like walking into the British museum after hours. The office was terribly busy. The school secretary was handling some kind of problem. The lights were out somewhere in the building and there was panic in the corridors. I could see why, and you could too, if you turn a junior high loose at 8:00 o'clock in the morning with no lights. At any rate I stood around for a moment while my son nervously clutched his brown paper lunch bag and finally said, "Could I see the principal."

Finally the principal came in and I said, "My name is Ned Hubbell and this is the youngster that I talked to you about, Ken. How do we go about enrolling him?"

"Oh yes, you probably want to do that right now, don't you," he said.

I said, "Well, yes, but we could come back tomorrow."

"We'll come back," Kenny said.

At any rate he finally said, "You'll have to excuse me, I'm awfully busy this morning. The school photographer is here and I've got to tend to this. It's such a mess." He spent ten minutes telling me about his problem. He turned Kenny and me over to his secretary who said, "Look, I haven't got time. Let me see if I can find a teacher or something."

Really this all happened. Finally some teacher came and saw PANIC written on the kid's forehead and sat down and talked with him for a few minutes and patted me on the head and said, "He'll be alive at 4:00 if you want to come back and pick him up."

We left, and I'll never forget the look on that kid's face. He doesn't like me to tell this story because he is a freshman in college now. That kid looked like he was never going to see me again. I hadn't realized such a shock could overcome a kid that way, at that age especially. The fourth grader just sat there and watched. When we got in the car he said, "Dad, why don't we just forget it."

We went to the elementary school because I had vowed to their mother I would return alone. When we walked into the elementary school the principal was talking with a teacher in her office. As we walked in the door, this kid of mine looked as if he were going to the electric chair. The minute we walked in, the principal got up and said, "Betty, you'll have to excuse me," and walked to the door and said, "You must be Gary Hubbell.

I have been waiting for you."

The kid says, "Who, me?" From there on he was right in. She took us in, and as we sat down and I said, "I don't want to take too much of your time."

She said, "I've got all day."

I thought, gee that's a switch. She gave us all the information we wanted to know. She solved the problems that he was concerned about--the new math. For the first time in my life I understood the new math when she said, "Oh, there isn't any such thing as new math. Math is math, we just have a way of doing it that is more fun." I thought that's kind of a saleable pitch, I've got to remember that, and I always have.

She took us on a tour of the school. She knew the name of every kid in the hall that went by. I swear there must have been a thousand kids in the building. She took the boy around and deliberately introduced him to the only man teacher in the building, the physical education teacher. She took him upstairs to his room, brought his teacher out and introduced him. The teacher sent for Susie--"You stick with this kid all day, you're his buddy." The kid came home at noon to eat his lunch and said, "Mom, this is the last day I can eat at home. There's too much going on at school. I've got to get back."

The eighth grader came home in tears every day for three weeks. I'm not saying that it is the school's fault, but it is an illustration of a real life story.

All of a sudden it hit me: It doesn't matter what kind of press releases are put out; it doesn't matter what kind of open houses, annual reports, television shows, gimmactry, gadgetry or wisardry that is done. There are two PR programs going on in that school system. The secondary schools have one and the elementary schools another.

Notice now how I lump them both together and generalize them. You ask me to this day what I think of that school system and I automatically have a tendency to say, which I have learned is not true, that they have a great elementary program but their secondary program is poor. Why? Because something happened. The public relations directors of the school system met the father and kid when they went to enroll in the school.

Minor illustration, insignificant point; it doesn't matter, they still passed their bond issues. I voted yes, Kenny got over it. It's a great junior high. It took him only three weeks to quit crying and six weeks to get adjusted, and it was not their fault. It was that first impression that seemed to do it. I guess that's not so unusual. That's public relations friends. It isn't anything that we can turn on or turn off. I am always a little frightened of public relations consultants. I have got a brand new definition for you, Ross. A consultant is a guy that you fly in from out of town, you pay all of his expenses and when he gets there he looks at your watch and tells you what time it is. It is just another way of indicating that he tells you what you already know. I don't think we need to go to consultants to learn, or have someone come in from out of town to tell you what you already know. I apologize if it appears this is what is happening.

In a recent publication, Gloria Dapper said this about me and that nameless suburban Chicago school district. "Ned, unavoidably the public holds certain convictions about the schools. They believe certain things to be true, and when the word "school" is pronounced, conjure up a particular mental picture. These convictions, opinions, and mental images are the product of public relations, planned or otherwise." Therein hangs the tale of the morning and perhaps of the day, and perhaps our work with the public.

I worry about the word "image," and we might as well talk about it. We are frequently asked by superintendents, plagued by adversity to "fix our image," as if it were something one does, and it changes. The image as Gloria Dapper points out are strictly a reflection of reality as viewed by the beholder. The image of the school system was formed the day I enrolled the two youngsters. It is formed when a parent picks up a telephone and calls the school and a voice answers, "hello." It is formed when you walk into a school building and they make you feel like you are really welcome there. It's formed by the relationship of human beings with other human beings. It is supported by skillfull devices and techniques. However, all of the merchandising, marketing, advertising, publicity, gimmictry, and gadgetry in the world is not going to move an inferior product off of the shelf for very long because the public is too smart; they know better.

I would like to suggest that the public relations of public and private institutions are just like everything else, they are based on attitudes which are formed not only by what people read, but by what they hear and by their own personal experiences with the institutions. And therein lies a first class task. My point is that most people think, and I too used to think, that public relations was publicity and press releases. Now I believe that it is personal relationship more than anything. These relationships can be reinforced, strengthened, improved and interpreted to create a good public relations program.

There is no guarantee that mere information by itself is going to lead to understanding. I used to measure our PR effectiveness for my superintendent for the first two years by bringing in a scrapbook. He'd say, "Come on Ned, we've got to show the board that you are worth what we are paying you. Show me our public relations program. Where is that thing."

So I would dutifully pull out the daily newspaper scrapbook and say, "Look here your honor, we now have 9472 column inches compared to last year's 2400. Four and one-half times increase."

Forget it. Sure it is great to get lots of copy in the press, but I am more concerned with what is said. All of that 9472 column inches did not make a bit of difference when I walked into that Locus Junior High School. I didn't believe it. As a result, I am not concerned about the information that goes on. I am concerned about the interpretation that goes on. I think that we give an awful lot of lip service to the fact that we will get real understanding just by having good communication. I think that communication is a part of it, but there is more to it because there are two sides of the communication. The federal government has done more to make the public schools aware of the need for certain kinds of community interaction due to various pieces of legislation such as the Title III programs. Unfortunately, this has been interpreted as public relations, but Uncle Sam calls it what it is. He calls it dissemination, which is completely different.

I would like to give you some illustrations of what PR really is, how it can be rightly organized in a school system, who does it, what the major concerns are that ought to be kept in mind while we decide how we are doing, and some ways we might want to do it better.

In the elementary school that Gary Hubbell was enrolled was held an open house one night to which we all came as parents. I used to feel sorry for that school system. (Gary bothered them because he made the classroom ratio 22 to 1. We had hoped to hold it under 35 in my town.)

They had displayed around the room samples of the kids handwriting. I discovered where the kids had been practicing cursive writing. (I had to explain to an irrate father in my town once that this was not profanity.)

I noticed that all the handwriters apparently had been answering the same question since they all seemed to be talking about the same subject; so I asked the teacher, "What is all of this?"

She said, "These are samples of the children's cursive writing."

I said, "No, I didn't mean that. I mean what are they writing about. They all look to be about the same thing."

She said she gave them an assignment, answering in one sentence in their best cursive style the answer to the question, "What is a school?" The little fourth grade penmen and philosophers answered and all of their samples were up. I still remember them. One said, "School is Mrs. Swanson who taught me how to read." She was the first grade teacher. Another one said, "School is Mr. Schaffer who took me home when I was sick." He was the principal. Another one said, "School is Mr. Ross, who picks me up on the corner every day." He was the bus driver, and incidently my only contact with that school for the first six weeks I was there. "A school is Mr. Woods who fixed my galoshes." A custodian, they can fix anything and often do. They got better. One said, "School is kids and teachers." That's pretty good but it leaves out parents, bus drivers, custodians, and so on.

The best one said, "School is people." It sure is. It is the interrelationships of everything that happens within the people and among the people who are affected daily by the life of that school.

PR directors for school systems across the country are known by devious titles. I had four titles in the eight years I was working for the school systems. I was the Director of Information and Research until they discovered I was in the eleventh percentile of quantitative ability on the graduate record examination, and they decided to drop the research. They gave me something to study and I didn't understand the table of random

numbers, but I do now. Now they are called School Community Relations Directors.

If the school is people, then how do we go about finding out what is the school's public relations? To begin with, the word public is plural. Public is a group of people with a common interest, and the school has several of them as you know. In our school we used to worry about two kinds of audiences, those inside and outside. Or as the academicians say, the internal and external audiences to whom we must communicate effectively. The inside audience of the school is the kids, the teachers, and all other staff members. (Put administrators in a separate category because they are not personally involved in the life of each child.) The other member of the internal audience is the Board of Education.

Who do we consider our most important outside audience? Usually, parents. Now isn't that interesting that we put them outside? Who has more regular contact, direct or indirect with the school than anyone else. It's those who send the kids, rear them, and listen to them when they come home every day. It is traditional in our business to talk about "us" and "them." I discovered in the urban areas of Detroit that "them" are right in the building. "Them" are protesting, demonstrating, demanding to be let in. "Them" are demanding more involvement and participation in the two most priceless possessions they have--their youngsters and their pocketbooks. "Them" want to know what is going on all the time; not just when more money is needed.

In Michigan we can really organize neighborhoods and pass tax levies and bond campaigns. We have coffee klatches and get 500 hundred women to pour coffees. We really sell a bond issue, and then after they give us a "yes" we take the money and go away and do a good job with it and never bother them again until it is time for more. The list of members of the

outside audience is continuous and consists of people with varied interests.

The old idea of just getting out a press release for just one shot doesn't work anymore. That was the hypodermic theory of communication. You would say, "I'll give a speech, put out a press release, or a brochure and the world will know." Well, not necessarily because we have discovered that different audiences have different concerns, different understandings and different sets of experience. We are beginning to find out that we have to use different kinds of messages. We have learned, for example, that a staff newsletter once a month is better than none, but after awhile we find that once a month isn't enough. Now it is once a week. The custodians would like to have their own, because they don't want all of that teacher stuff. They kind of like their own "thing." I know one PR director putting out one for custodians, one for clerks and a quicky for the teachers. This guy's an octopus, and he had better be because he has several different audiences.

When I started with our school system, my boss was one of the sharpest, finest men that I knew, and a real astute PR guy. He put out a newspaper annual report as a tabloid in 1952. That was 17 years ago. He let me work with him 13 years ago. In 1956, his was the third school system in Michigan to have a PR director. He said, "Look you are not my publicity man. Lord knows I need one but you are the school district's."

Well, he had a newsletter for all employees, that went out once a month. It was printed on Goldenrod stock, mimeographed. I discovered later it was because we had lots of Goldenrod mimeograph paper in the warehouse. It was an awful color. One day the business manager at coffee break said casually, "I don't know what's wrong with this system, but we're traveling on paper because I've got three-fourths of the building ordering bigger and more waste baskets."

This stuck with me, and in my traveling through the buildings I started chimning with the secretaries, who can really let you know what is going on. Between them and the custodians you have all of the news you can handle. I noticed that in one school the offices were ordering great big waste baskets (like you put in boys restrooms for paper towels). I said to one gal, "Betty, why do you need such a great big wastebasket?"

She said, "For underneath the faculty mailbox."

I said, "You've got to be kidding."

She said, "They get so much junk. It's just throw, throw, throw all the time. You know the one I feel sorry for is the superintendent's newsletter. They don't read it."

I said, "Oh come on now."

Betty said, "They don't read it. You know what they call it. "The Goldenrod Gazette." I feel sorry for him, because I know he puts in a lot of time on it."

I thought, well that's just Betty's opinion, so I started sampling the Betty's in our school system and I got a kind of general reaction. Then I stuck my nose into the teachers' lounge. By this time they had admitted that I was not a spy for the superintendent. I finally thought by golly they have a point, they don't like this newsletter, there is something wrong. It isn't accomplishing what it is intended for. It's making them mad and they are making fun of it. So I went to the superintendent and said, "Your honor (with a difficult subject it is always better to approach him that way) why don't we try to put some different kinds of things in the newsletter?"

"What's the matter with my newsletter?"

You see that--"with my newsletter"? I said, "Sir, nothing that

I know of yet. I don't think that you write it as your newsletter, it's theirs and I have discovered that somehow apparently we are missing the boat."

He said, "If they are not reading it I can fix it."

I asked for permission to sample opinion of the staff. We did a staff questionnaire. I thought he was going to change it, write something different, but what he did was to staple it to the pay checks the following payday. Seriously, he deduced that if it was stapled to a valuable object it would get treated as something valuable, but it was rip and read; rip the newsletter and read the check. When I surveyed the people to ask them about their newsletter I got a 85 percent response. It came back to me in sealed, self-addressed envelopes, not through the building mail where the handwriting could be recognized.

I discovered what my psychology teacher told me in college. People are first interested in themselves and in anything that affects them. "Be it ever so homely there's no face like my own." We are interested in ourselves, anything that affects us, that did affect us, that will affect us, and that might affect us. My payroll clerk will attest to that. I tried to see her one day and ask her a question about my paycheck. There were 550 people in our building and she had 383 phone calls on one Friday, all asking the same question, "Why did you take more out of my teacher's retirement fund this week?" She knew in advance that this was going to happen and a little note in advance would have made the calls unnecessary.

I told the boss, "This is the kind of thing they would like to know in the newspaper. Why we are taking another $1.10 out of their check."

His answer was, "Can't they budget any better than that?"

I said, "Sir, if you were a custodian making $3900 a year, could you?"

That's not the point, it's his money and he would just like to know if it is for a legitimate purpose, because he has to explain it to his wife. "Where's that $1.10, Charley, you stopped for a beer, now confess." It's little things like this they would like to know.

They don't want to call, and when they call they are telling us something. They are screaming for information after the fact. So we put little payroll enclosure notes in there stating their check will look a little bigger this week, because of the state reducing income tax or something. We let them know ahead of time. They are also interested in other people, especially those with whom they work and those on the staff, even though they don't know them. They want to know things about other people, building progress, etc., etc. And last they are interested in concepts and ideas. The analysis of the questionnaire pointed out that there needed to be a mixture of those kinds of things that were more relevant and helpful to them; things they are more interested in.

The point is, that what it forced us to do was to take a look at the audience inside, and show ourselves that it doesn't matter what we tell the outside audience if the inside audience is not well informed about what is going on, and if we don't understand what concerns them. They will be telling different stories. Everyday that a kid goes home he takes with him an attitude about school. Parents will tell you this.

I have had my bad eating habits corrected by your classroom teachers. "Daddy, Miss Jones says you don't eat that way. Miss Jones says, Miss Jones says..." I had to go and meet Miss Jones since I received so many reports by her. My kid brings home the public relations of the school system. If I discover that I have a question about my school

system, who do I ask? Do I call the superintendent or go and see a board member? Maybe they do in your town, but we discovered in our town what the same thing the Standord studies showed concerning communities and their schools, voters and their schools, which was published in 1960. This is the best work about community relations research done in the country. It proved that if people have a question about the school system or they want to track down a rumor or verify one, they will ask a school employee.

I have heard over and over again from the superintendents, "Why don't the teachers keep their mouths shut?" This is said particularly at bond issue time. We have discovered that during campaign time we had been so busy organizing the coffee klatches and marching around the neighborhoods that we had forgotten the first group of people that are consulted for information about a bond issue, the employees. That is when teachers are asked, "What do you need this 11 cents for?"

Teachers responded, "It beats me. They don't budget the money they have now." Some inane, inept remark? It's true, he shouldn't say it, but he says because he doesn't know why the 11 cents is needed.

I guess I believe like Bell Telephone, that communication is a corporate necessity and an employee responsibility. It belongs on both shoulders. If I had my druthers, and I wanted to work on a school community relations program, I would start by spending all of my time right in the inside.

I would be concerned with what kinds of attitudes kids take home. I'd quit using kids for my channels of communication to the home. I used to be a great believer in sending things home with children. We automatically assume that children come from home and then return everyday to where they come from. That if you want to get a message home, send it

by the child, right? Right. Up to a point. Children come home from kindergarten with a message from the superintendent taped to their forehead. Teacher says read this. First graders clutch it in their hands and make you read it to them. Second graders bring it. Third graders bring it. Fourth graders begin to drop it sometimes. I'm just generalizing, but the older the child the greater the throw-a-way. I learned from my school bus drivers that if you send anything home with high school kids, give the driver a broom so that he can sweep the bus out, because that is where it ends up. I have seen voters turn down tax issues and school personnel and not understand the reason for it. Why, because the only information that was sent to the community was sent home by the children and half of it did not get there. There's hypodermic theory again--I'll send it out and therefore assume that it gets there.

I quit sending home little printed inserts with report cards. We use to tuck in a little insert with their report card explaining a part of the school's policy on curriculum, philosophy, attendance or something. I discovered it was best to wait for good report cards, when you are sending a little message to the parents. The parent is not receptive to messages concerning new tax rates when it is coupled with bad report cards.

At any rate, all I am suggesting is that the old traditional ways of letting people know what might interest them are outdated.

We have discovered that the problem of sex education in Michigan is not as serious as the minority's loud noise is making it. We have discovered that when we show parents books, films, and actual demonstrations they will stand up and give an unanimous vote to continue the program. We are finished going to the Rotary Club and explaining our sex education program, and having the Rotarians, at the end of the meeting,

say, "I move that we pass a resolution endorsing the school boards program of sex education," and the motion gets passed and go in the paper. We felt great, but at the next board meeting, who is in the audience? There isn't a Rotarian to be found, only 300 angry militants.

Now we are saying to Rotary Clubs when we explain the program; If you feel as we do that this is good for kids, we would like to ask those of you who can spare the time to bring your interests and concerns to the board of education meeting. We will pass a paper around. Will you just sign up, those of you who can be there? At the next board meeting we find that 3/4 of the audience is supportive because they signed up and said they would come. Now that is different than a resolution. That's personal involvement! It has been making a difference in communities that have been upset by noises that appear to come from majorities but actually does not represent what the majority of parents really think.

The parents are the primary public; obviously, their attitudes are shaped by the classroom teacher who is the public relations director. The kinds of common beliefs and communications that exist within the school system will have more rub off effect outside than any technique we can use.

The outside public will hopefully interpret good work of the good people. The custodian that greets a guy in the hall and wines and dines him to a tour of the building does more for the public relations program than anything. The secretary that answers the phone with a smile in her voice and says, "Good morning, Philmore School" does more to help the PR than anything. I had a parent come to me once and say "Have you got anybody in your central school office that can answer a question?"

I said, "Sure, what's the problem."

"Everytime I call I get shifted. The switchboard operator ends

up with four different offices before she gets somebody and he usually says 'why don't you call your principal.' It was the principal who said, 'why don't you call the central office,' and there she goes again with blindman's bluff."

One of the best things we ever did in our district, at a parent's suggestion, was to make a list of all the questions and concerns that we thought parents ask, would ask, or had asked. The secretaries in all of the schools gave us the list. Strangely enough we found a pattern. We found two or three things being asked all over the system when people called in by telephone. We discovered, for example, that homework was bugging them. We hadn't heard anything about it. No one had come to the board meeting. There wasn't a nasty letter in the paper. There was no picketing. We decided to call the principals together and ask if there was anything to the question. What was our homework policy? We discovered to our horror that we didn't have one in most buildings or within the district. So on our list, under "H" for homework, in our central office, we designated a guy who was going to be responsible to answer questions on that. Where does the buck stop? We went through a list of who do you call to get what. We had to. We had just reorganized and had gobbled up nine adjacent school districts. Now they were part of the bureaucracy of a reorganized district. We had doubled our size with 117 square miles and 35 elementary schools. The poeple didn't feel like they could find any answers to anything. Do you know how that list helped? It helped us more than it helped them. It got us organized so that we quit passing people around. When a question came to the switchboard the call went to the person named on the list; usually his secretary could give the correct answer. It's this darn little stuff that helps. It's

the little stuff that comes from finally paying attention to who is out there.

I would like to suggest that we take the parents and put them in the internal audience, because it is the one that is affected directly and indirectly by the regular daily life of the school organization. It may not be popular in Indiana, but I think I learned more about the school system and how to change attitudes positively by instituting parent-teacher conferences. Whether you use them in lieu of, or to supplement report cards, is a matter of preference, but when a parent sits down with a classroom teacher the only real thing they have in common is the youngster. By making parent-teacher conferences mandatory in our district several years ago, we have done more to improve our PR and our communication than anything else we had done in the past. We are getting a 94 percent attendance factor, including dads. We are now learning that maybe we ought to schedule them at night so that the dads can attend and give teachers release time in the morning. We have learned to quit holding preregistration from 9:00 in the morning until 3:00 in the afternoon when all the working mothers in our town have to take a day off and lose a day's pay in order to register their kid. When we put ourselves in the other guys shoes we find better ways to learn how to reach him and how the two of us can get together.

A friend of mine, about 80 miles west of here in Danville, Illinois, told me, "Never judge an Indian, Ned, until you have walked in his mocasins for two moons." That's pretty good advice for PR people. We have to become less message oriented in our business and become more audience oriented. I am concerned, frankly, after having weathered the first one through high school, about what kids think. I am concerned about their attitudes toward dress codes. I watched an underground newspaper

practically develop in my basement. I say "underground" good naturedly. It is not a dirty thing. I listened to student council members who met in my basement about trying to get their principal to listen to them about making girls quit kneeling on the floor and measuring if their skirt was more than eight or three inches or whatever from it. How they conned him into getting that changed I don't know, but they have not had any more problems. It is one school, incidently, that is not being hit by a lawsuit from the American Civil Liberties Union, which is now blanketing and threatening to sue the entire state including the State Board of Education. I am not saying that militant kids are right. Don't misunderstand me. I am just saying that we have discovered that a prime audience in the school system is the youngsters and maybe we ought to meet with them. My superintendent used to have a press conference every week with every high school editor in the school system. They came and asked him anything, and then went ahead and printed what he said or what they thought he said. Rather than just holding a conference for the press downtown let's get the kids in there.

I am concerned with what teachers and custodians think. I had devil's advocate committees all over my school system which I would meet with every Friday afternoon in a local "Pub" (pardon the expression) in order to find out what the rumor mill was saying, because I gave up trying to kill it. I learned that in the army you can't stamp out scuttlebutt no matter how hard you try. My boss used to say, "Damn the rumor networks; we've got to squelch those rumors." You can't.

Rumors tell you what people want to know. In the absence of fact they will make them up. You fill that gap and they will make another one. I want to listen to them. It is a communication network of its own. I use

it. I plant rumors and counter rumors. This is sometimes better and more believeable than putting out a newsletter.

I can track a rumor in my district, can't you? I can drop a rumor in the teachers lounge in the extreme southwestern corner of that 117 square miles and it will reach the northeast corner in 4 hours and 10 minutes. I can also tell you what happens to the message in there. I care what the people who work here think, because I know that when they go to their bridge clubs, barbershop, beer parlors, or bowling alleys they talk. Instead of saying "why don't they keep their mouths shut," which I don't think is fair, we should say "How can we put the proper information in their mouths?" I recognize that we are going to lose some and still have malcontents, but I care about this kind of information.

"Tell your own people first. Then tell somebody else." This is how I work. We have discovered that parents want to get in there, not just as paraprofessionals or noon hour supervisors to help the harried classroom teacher control the lunchroom mess, or the playground supervisor, but they want to get involved in curriculum committees and in textbook selection committees. I know that they are lay people, but I suddenly discovered that when we get them year-round to help us work on something that both of us care about, the education of their youngsters, we seem to have better understanding going on. It's more work and brings more problems, but I hesitate to find any more alternatives and not do it.

Instead of having a rubber stamp committee at bond issue time, we sit around and decide how much money we are going to need and who we can get to sell it for us. Then we went out and got a king pin from the community for chairman and another one for co-chairman. We would write all of the bulletins and they would shoot them out. For awhile it worked, it gave an

air of authenticity and believability to the publicity. It doesn't work anymore. They said they would like to get involved in helping our needs and make recommendations to the board. Fine, but when they got in they thought we should go for the works. The board said no, the public won't buy that, we'll just go for three-fourths of it. It got turned down, and the citizens committee said, "Let's tell them what we need; let's go for what we need; let's do a better job of telling them." Then they'd go out and pass the whole ballgame.

Then we say, "We'd better listen to those people." If we are not careful we will delegate the authority of the whole school system to them. I have seen that happen. Everytime the citizens committee chairman comes in the room it's "Yes, Sir." Pretty soon they get on school boards, and things begin to change.

I'm tired of listening to my wife, every Saturday afternoon, tell me how much the price of food has gone up. Does yours? Does your neighbors? What did I do at bond issue time? I passed out literature at supermarkets asking them to support a school tax raise as my wife came out of the supermarket with dollar bills ringing in her head.

That was not the time to talk to her, but it was the time to recognize that she was paying more for food than she had ever paid; more for a house; more to live than ever before. We also are making more money than ever before, but everybody is still dollar conscious.

All of a sudden there is only one place to speak up about the tax load and the overburdened taxpayer, and that is in the public polling place at school election time. There is a general resentment and rebellion against taxation. Oh, I had better amend that--we get the vote on sewer issues too. Superintendent of Detroit, Norm Drachler says, "In Michigan we

get to vote on sewers or schools, which is a chance for us to decide whether we stink or think." That's a pretty lousy pair for priorities.

But ladies and gentlemen, I would like to suggest this, even in the face of rising taxpayers rebellion, which is a nice label sometimes for a pretty poor communication job on our part, even in the midst of higher grocery prices and too many taxes, why are school systems in my overburdened state still passing school operated tax levies, still passing bond issues, still building schools and saying I don't wanna but by gosh kids are worth it and voting yes. They are. Two out of three of them are. Sometimes it takes several elections. However, we finally learn how to communicate in the last one and get people involved. We make the message nice and simple and quit telling them how many dollars it's going to cost them. We show them a pound of coffee and say it's about that much more a week, isn't your kids worth that? We stop saying 97 cents per thousand, which they don't understand. The point is, we finally do what community relation people tell us we should be doing year round, interpreting with every mechanism we've got with every employee we've got and what we are doing with kids. We need all the help we can get. We need more regular involvement of lots of people. Involvement of lots of people. Involvement used to be a cliche. We ought to have more involvement. Now we don't know how to shut it off, and when we begin to get defensive about shutting it off we end up trying to answer charges rather than initiate the communication.

I don't know much about the subject of the morning; everyday I learn something new. My boss used to tell me that we used to have a superintendent who ran the whole thing. Then the district got a little bigger and he finally had to get some help; and who did he get first--a finance director. Business manager. Then as the new ideas in curriculum

came along he got a guy to be the curriculum director. Then as the kids kept being born and living all over they got a guy to run the buses. Pretty soon we got a hot lunch director. Then Uncle Same banged the gavel and out came the money from the hills and now everybody has a federal project director. We've begun to delegate piecemeal jobs that one man just cannot handle. All of a sudden we've got to have some help from someplace else.

Everytime I go to a meeting in Port Huron, Michigan, where I used to work for the school, and walk into a room, everyone looks around, nudges one another, and say when's the next election? Ned, the mileage merchant is here. When you vote eight times in three years, they know you. That is why I really had to leave; either that or get asked to leave.

I think we need to give school administrators some kind of a guy or gal who is somehow skilled, not in sending messages, but in listening. We need someone who can serve as a mirror to reflect the organization to itself. My boss used to call me the sidewalk superintendent--"Get out there Ned and get your nose to the ground and your rear end in the air and good luck. I want to know what they are talking about in the barbershops. Don't go to the Rotary Clubs, go to the township fire departments."

We found that at bond issue time when we talked to the barbers in the barbershops on Wednesdays, when the shops were closed, we got the barbers committed. It was better than asking them to come down to a meeting at the board of education office on a Wednesday night. Never have barbers come to a meeting on a Wednesday night. Never, because they had Wednesday afternoon off and we wondered why didn't they come.

Move the board of education around from school to school, take it out there. We used to think that was a good idea, but people still don't come, so what are board members in some communities doing now--they are

going out and coffee klatching, as individuals. All they say is, "I'm a member of the board of education and it's impossible to meet you any other way, what would you like to know about the schools?" Boy, that takes courage. Year-around, during noncrisis time when they are asked a question that they can't answer the board members say, "Just a minute, may I have your name and phone number and I'll see that you get an answer." Then he comes back and says to the PR director, "Get a hold of this person and give him that answer."

Oh, I used to hate my board members when they came in from those coffee klatches--lists of questions--but I would do it. I'd call that person the next day and I would say, "I'm Ned Hubbell from the Port Huron School, Dr. C____ said he was in a meeting with you and you asked him a question last night that he couldn't answer; I'm calling to see if I can answer it." After they picked themselves up off the floor, I'd answer it. That approach did more good for us than any board meeting ever did. It isn't whether the answer is right or not in their eyes, it's the fact that somebody promised to listen and did.

My boss used to say "It's the little things that take all of your time and if we don't attend to them they'll get in the way of all the big things."

What we are suggesting here is a re-examination of the priority of communication. Try pretending you are lonely radio announcers on a late night show who sit alone in that studio. Every listen to them about 3:00 in the morning? They're nuts. They are just begging for the phone to ring. I know, I used to do that for a living and finally I looked at the microphone one day and said, "Is there anybody out there?" Well, I learned in the radio business there is one way to find out--make a mistake

and the phone will come off the wall. Isn't that true about the school business? Take the education writer for the New York Times, one of the best. He never puts anything in the New York Times other than controversy about the New York schools. I said to him one time, "Leonard, why don't you put in some of the great things they are doing, some of those impossible things they are accomplishing in that empire that is New York City."

He said, "Ned, it's their job to do a good job; so what's news, what's newsy about normalcy. When you do an exceptionally good or bad job, that's news as far as the press is concerned. If you will tell me what those exceptional good jobs are then I'll report them. Don't worry about the bad jobs I'll get those myself."

Then I discovered when you tell the editor the bad jobs, you make believers out of the press that public relations is not just reporting what we want and sifting out the rest, it is reporting everything that interests, affects and concerns the audiences and what they want to know.

One of the hardest things I ever had to do as an ex-reporter was to call the city room of the Times Herald and say, "Will you send a reporter and photographer to the corner of Carrigan Road and Pine Grove Avenue; we've had a school bus accident. I'll meet you there." I'd rather not tell them about it. When kids get hurt you would rather just forget it and pretend nobody heard, but it happened. When the police reporter called me up and said, "Say what's this I hear about a kid getting stabbed in the high school parking lot." I said, "What, what, what." This was a few years ago.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Workshop Session

We have, from all groups, a number of questions pertaining to the role of the classroom teacher in the school public relations program.

If you want your teachers to be your public relations people, how do you find time to meet with them to get this philosophy across without them feeling that it is a waste of time? This is a problem I think most of us have. Is there a way of involving people without making them feel they are wasting their time? Who would like to take a stab at that?

Answer: I think there are several answers to that, none of which are complete. It seems to me that you would take this time as if it were any in-service activity. It has to be planned regularly. For example, one technique that could be used would be to have some sort of orientation meeting previous to the opening of school to remind the staff of the importance of this particular role. You can use techniques such as public relation councils throughout the school district, whereby, perhaps you involve a teacher from every building and set up a network through which they can feed back information from their respective schools. You can develop a primer in PR. Bob Freeman has one that he circulated among council schools. The business of finding time to remind the teachers of the criticalness of this area is no different than any other in-service activity in which we have trouble finding time for. From the standpoint of answering or giving one pat formula for locating this kind of time, I just don't feel this is possible.

Second respondent: We thought that answer was a typical answer from a superintendent of schools. We are not satisfied with it because it is not specific. He is talking in generalities. We want something specific.

Moderator: May I, in defense of the speaker, point out that he mentioned at least three techniques; one, a pre-school orientation; two, a continuing involvement of all teachers from each building; three, a handbook. What they are after is some specific ideas. Is there anybody that would like to tinker with this for a minute? If we can field an answer, we can revolutionize public education.

Comment: Personally, I think that the administrator of the building has the responsibility, if he is interested in developing public relations at the faculty level, to first go that way himself and carry out public relations measures that will establish rapport with the teachers. He should help them to keep up to date on new developments. For example, distribution of a faculty bulletin at regular intervals to keep them informed; open house in your office during the preparation time for negotiations. Make the teachers understand that this is an opportunity for them to see the principal once in a while.

Comment: What he says is that you create that climate yourself.

Question: In getting priorities identified for negotiations, the highest grievance seemed to be the number of meetings held. What priority should the public relations committee have in relationship to other meetings, or should they be combined?

Comment: Before I see who would like to answer that, I am reminded of some advice a friend of mine gave me. He said, "I guess you scratch depending on how badly it itches." But that is not the answer you are entitled to or deserve. Elizabeth, is your hand up? Elizabeth has a

minute to take a stab at a very good question.

Answer: Well, I think public relations is something that the superintendent can work on with the school board. I feel that if you really need to involve your teachers that the school board should be made to realize that the teachers need release time. I don't think teachers should be expected, in this day and age with the increased teacher militancy, to meet constantly after school. I can give, for example, two days of paid in-service training that we are going to give this year. We started last year, one day each semester. I think this is a way of getting teachers to realize that we feel it is important enough to get them involved in school PR and issues that face the school and that we are willing to pay them to get them to come to the meetings. I don't say that teachers should get paid for everything they go to; but, I say that if you go half way, the teachers will go the other half. One other point, I think the superintendent sets the climate by giving frank honest opinions without jumping down the teachers' throats.

Question: What are the implications for a school system's public relations caused by closed sessions of the board of education? I think closed sessions means those closed to both the internal audience and the external audience.

Answer: I think we have to realize first that as far as public relations implications are concerned the people who are vitally concerned with this area is the press. They are always going to take potshots at you for having closed sessions. By the same token, there is legal precedent and legal support for study sessions (that's what we call them) whereby any governmental agency or board may discuss and examine issues in a session that is not open to the public. The critical factor of course

is if the board takes any kind of action that will affect the public in that closed meeting, then they are acting illegally. It seems to me that from the standpoint of the external public relations the press is going to have to understand this whether they like it or not. I am talking about the general kind of routine matters where the board feels they cannot let down their hair in front of the press and public, and still examine every aspect of the issue. Besides it is time consuming. When you set in on a public board meeting and you take a long time to look at every issue, you are usurping the time of a lot of people who did not need to hear all of that discussion. From an internal standpoint, if the items under discussion have ramifications for the future, you would want your director of information services, or your PR person, or your secondary principal or somebody else that might be involved in that decision or have to understand it at a future time be involved in that discussion. I would say that perhaps 75 percent of the time that many of these problems do not affect individual staff members, as such, and perhaps from that standpoint those people would not need to be involved. Again, the study sessions are for the purpose, at least in our district, of allowing the superintendent and his staff and the board to have open informal exchange of ideas on a particular issue without saying something that they might feel are going to be quoted on in the morning or evening paper.

Question: Should the person responsible for public information be admitted to the executive sessions or not. Our thought is this: if he or she is admitted he might stand in the way of freedom to voice an opinion because here is a staff member who is in a sense an employee, and this might be information that he could leak out. Secondly, would such a person's presence in the executive session jeopardize the relationship with

the media because they might call this person and say "you were there." If you can say you don't know you are better off.

Answer: I think that if you have a public relations person that you can't trust then I suggest you find someone else. I think PR personnel have to realize that some things are confidential, if they are involved in an executive session. If that person is not to be trusted then you don't need to have that person on your staff. I am also saying that it is the news media's job to pump me. It is also my job to know what to say to them and what not to say to them. It's a question of knowing your school board policy and knowing your media and knowing what may be said, what should not be said and what could be left, maybe, for a later date. This person must be absolutely trustworthy and must know the interworkings of the school board and the superintendent.

Moderator: Thank you very much Elizabeth. What she has just said is what a PR friend of mine said about the tightrope that a PR man walks between the various publics he represents. She has talked about the credibility and the climate of the relationship between the staff member and the board. I think it was three years after I worked for the school system that I was admitted to the inner sanctums. It took that long for the board to decide that this was not a publicity job, that I did need the background and that I could be trusted. I think it took me three years to convince the press that there were things that I could not say. Here again it becomes a relationship between the people she works for and with. This may take time to develop. Here we are back to climate again and ethics of performance.

Comment: We may have misunderstood one specific thing that was mentioned. We question whether we would agree that the newspaper media

would just have to accept that we hold executive sessions. It may be we need to go beyond this, to establish their confidence; that what does go on in executive sessions which has meat to it, will in fact, at a later date be given to them in the way of releases. We have a responsibility to orientate them, the news media, to the fact that these executive sessions are necessary and that they are for the welfare of our school system.

Comment: I would concur. I certainly think that if you have the kind of press that is mature enough to accept that kind of reasoning then that is the operational procedure that I would recommend.

Moderator: An interesting new switch and change is that if you work with the same reporters all of the time these kinds of relationships develop, and if they do, I recommend their admittance to the study session. Talk about letting the PR man in there, let the reporter in there for background. That's the best solution, I think, both for the reporter and the board, but that too may take some time. But my point is, when the education writer moves on, you get a brand new guy, and the whole thing starts over. This is a realistic program both for the press and the school system.

Question: How does a metropolitan school district next to a large city get coverage by the media? That is, in the big newspapers, radios, and televisions of the large city. How do you get your stuff in that newspaper?

Answer: First of all, you need to go in and make yourself known. In other words they need to know who you are. You need to go in and say I'm Liz Tripett and work for so and so. I'm going to be sending in news releases, calling you on the phone, and alerting you to what's going on in my school district. You want to sit down and ask them what they are

interested in; their time requirements. I am sure the person you ask will know these time requirements already. I think it is a losing battle when you are a school outside a large city, but I think you can get certain things in if you keep plugging away, because I think they will get tired of seeing you.

Tailor the news to their requirements. Try to think of interesting things. I think Ned brought up a real good point this morning when he said that when things go wrong in your school don't shove it under the rug. It's going to be a matter of a police record or hospital record. When you call them, maybe it tears your heart, but they are going to realize that you are being fair with them and they will try to be fair with you; so, I think we need to report the good with the bad even if we don't want to.

Comment: This can be done at the local level through proper communications with the community through your parent bulletins. This sort of thing helps because parents will become interested and will call the big city newspaper and say how come, how come we're not in the story. I think that each of us in our schools are doing something of interest that the newspapers would like to have. Working through the systems' Public Relations man, invite some of the newspapers to your activities. Let them know where your heart beats.

Moderator: Mr. White has just said to us that news is anything that is timely and of interest to people. If you have news, they will print it. Also, we would have one footnote here. What's more important; setting up effective person-to-person communication within the attendance area of every building in your district or getting an occasional story in the daily newspaper? The answer to that is obvious, I am sure; but if you

can get more from the newspapers it's all in your ability to ferret out more of what they would be interested in and get it to them.

If school systems are taking the initiative rather than resting back and on the defensive and still not getting any action in the newspaper, they should go to the educational writer or editor and ask why they are not making the newspaper.

Go ask the reporter first and then if you are still missing the boat, go ask the editor. Don't ever go over the reporter's head without giving the reason for going to the editor. I usually go in and say I guess I goofed. I take all the blame. I don't go in and say you didn't print my story. That's a good way to get none of them printed. The guy that owns the printing press has the last word and that's the way it should be.

Question: How do we get more people out to a board meeting who favor what we are trying to accomplish, or at least favor the issue that is being discussed, as opposed to a roomful of people opposed?

Moderator: How do you get positive support? We're making an assumption that there is some. So why don't they go to the meetings? Why don't they go to the polls and vote?

Answer: Well, it seems to me that if people don't show up at your board meetings to support that which is a critical issue, then you haven't developed the necessary communication with them to let them know that it is critical for them to be there. Ned gave us a very good suggestion this morning. It is not sufficient to make some sort of general announcement or give a handout to the kids to carry home. That falls flat on its face. If you have really got an issue that's controversial and you need support, you've got to get a commitment out of people. People are too

busy to attend board meetings just because the board is going to meet that night. That just isn't the American way of life these days. There's too much competition for time. You either go, as Ned said, to the Rotary Club and get them to sign up or you get a verbal commitment. We have done this just recently with a county tax board hearing by getting a verbal commitment that they will be there and support the budget. You shouldn't just tell them what time and where. This is a very slipshod approach. If they don't show up as the question implies, then it is a reflection on you and your communication with the home and community.

Question: Do you risk oversell if you go out and try to bring in support. Secondly, is there a risk of the opposition redoubling their efforts of opposition.

Moderator: Can you oversell it, and if you do will you make people emphasize their own efforts? Are you liable to be getting two organized camps here and split the town?

Answer: I think this is a real hazard. I guess in the final analysis it boils down to your being sensitive to the various forces at work in your community. How the opposition group responds and how they react to the kind of issues you are facing is very important. You had better have more than the opposition has out because they will count and re-count signatures on petitions and count faces at the meetings, this sort of thing. Now they might not decide the total issue on the basis of numbers, but I think you are raising some very legitimate questions. My answer would be that's up to your PR person, your superintendent, and the members of the board.

Question: In building up your support, you know your opposition, let's say your extreme opposition. You know your extreme support too.

Would it be good strategy to pick your support from the middle ground rather than the extreme?

Answer: Yes. In fact I had that read into the suggestion that came out of the first group that responded. I think it is good sometimes, and perhaps many times, to get the power figures of the community. I also think it is very desirable to get the middle of the road person, the person who is not a member of the power structure. You might say that good old John Q. Public person, that not everybody knows, shows grass root strength.

Comment: And may represent the community better than does the power structure.

Question: Do you interpret lack of attendance as apathy or support and satisfaction; secondly, what do you think of an appointment by the superintendent of the advisory committee of parents, that represents a wider group of citizenry, who attends the board meeting in support of the school boards position on a particular issue?

Comment: I don't think you can interpret lack of attendance at a board meeting as no support. All that means is nobody came to the meeting that night. Paul, what's your feeling on this?

Comment: We can't even get our confusion organized.

Moderator: I was told a long time ago that to make any kind of communication effective, it ought to be at the convenience of the listener, not the speaker. I know a number of boards of education in this country that still meet at 12:30, Monday noon. They meet at a time that isn't convenient, at places that aren't convenient, with horrendous, formalized or disorganized agenda that prohibits the interest of those who attend.

Question: How do you tactfully contact the press to relate tragic incidents that happen?

Moderator: I guess really you are asking who should do the contacting, the principal where it happened, the superintendent in the district where it happened, or the PR person if there is one. How do you go about actually doing it? Who decides to call, is that your question?

Comment: The question is where do you draw the line in terms of what is reported as bad news that isn't bad.

Moderator: All right. In other words what is bad news?

Comment: And who makes the decisions?

Answer: I think this is where you have to have a school board policy on public relations. I think this is where you need to have a board stated policy, written out, as to what your goals in school PR are going to be. I think you have to have either a working understanding of whether the school principal of that building is going to release the information or whether the school PR person is responsible for calling or the school superintendent will release it. In other words, I think you have to have guidelines of operation established within the school corporation. I don't know if you are asking me who in your school corporation should be doing this. I think that should be left up to the individual school corporation, but I don't think you should wait until the situation arises or you may have a deadlock.

Comment: In general we feel that there should not be any real policy formation; but perhaps the individual will have to establish guidelines himself.

Moderator: Individuals. Which ones?

Comment: The public relations person is going to have to make the decision.

Moderator: You know, what we haven't said here. The guy on the

inside has got to know before he can decide who on the outside should be notified.

Comment: We agree wholeheartedly. It should be a policy and we should define the policy. If it concerns a building, any release is the responsibility of its administrative head. If it concerns a corporation, the PR person is responsible, this is the type of policy under which our group would operate.

Moderator: And may I add to that policy that the PR department, hopefully develops for the superintendent and principals a set of simple little guidelines and philosophy for dealing with the press saying, "This we endorse. You do it, and here's how and here's when." Just some suggestions so that building principals aren't frightened, as many of them are, when they call in a simple little story to their newspaper. They need just a little help with the technique. Who do you call at the newspaper, for example. You know, you call the newspaper and she answers "Press," then what do you do? You end up in the circulation department.

Question: Anymore, don't newspapers have people allocated to cover the schools? Don't they identify themselves with the principals.

Answer: Yes, very often. But the principal may not, if he is not dealing with them regularly. He wants to be told who the contact man is.

Question: Who decides if it affects the building or the corporation?

Answer: The building administrator decides, I think. He then notifies downtown, and they need to look and see if it involves more than just that one school.

Question: So it would appear that downtown needs to be notified before the press is notified?

Answer: Well, back to the philosophy of tell your own people first, I guess. Just so somebody else knows it.

Comment: A little local color. A few years ago we set up a PPS (Pupil Personnel Service). A junior high principal called me and he said, "I have just found out that one of our boys is responsible for a girl in another junior high being pregnant and I sent him home immediately. What should I do?" Well, this is just how frantic and overcome we get sometimes. I don't know how it helped to send the boy home but nevertheless these are some of the decisions that PR persons have to make.

Moderator: Anymore questions on dealing with the bad news?

Comment: We are partially satisfied with the answer given by that group. We feel that sometimes when you are asked a question sometimes it's interpreted as a bad answer regardless of how you answer. Can you be frank or how can you come back and say something without creating a communications gap? For example, if somebody comes up with a question that would have bad news implication. Bad news may be a bomb threat or something like this and/or maybe it's of gossip nature. Should you mention this or should you keep your eyes closed about a bomb threat or bus driver being drunk or something like this?

Answer: My feeling would be that you level with them on anything you know is not gossip. For example, if you know there was a school bus accident that morning, it would be pretty silly to deny it. On the other hand, why would you enter into the chain of gossip or rumor spreading if you don't know it to be fact at that time. As for the bomb threat, my own personal reaction would be to take care of it internally, and take whatever steps would be prescribed in that kind of situation. I wouldn't see any particular reason, unless you took action to send the kids home, and then it becomes a matter of record and then certainly you ought to share it with the press.

Comment: What he is saying is that sometimes publicity will make it worse. Here again, the nature of the degree.

Comment: Maybe policy could not be written up because it could not affect all of the cases that might come up. Each case might have to be considered differently.

Comment: It is only to a limited degree that policy will tell you what to do because of the changing circumstances of every event. All your policy is, is your intent and philosophy and basic procedure of notification; but as to when and where again we are back to the human end of it.

Moderator: We've been talking about the kinds of skills and especially judgement that is required in a good PR person. If you had your druthers Mr. Supt., are convinced you need somebody for this, what kind of a guy or gal would you look for?

Comment: First of all, you have to get someone you think you can work with very closely and can trust. I think it is a mutual trust situation. Second, you have to get somebody that you feel will be innovative, because school PR is innovation, constantly thinking of ideas. Third, you need to get somebody who is not afraid to speak their own opinion and give you their very best thinking, even though sometimes you don't want to hear that one single bit, but you've got to hear it. The person must be candid with the superintendent, otherwise he cannot fulfill his true responsibility. I would say lastly that the person must be dependable, must be able to establish good working relationships with segments of media, and does not play favorites with the news media. I think the person should be a professional.

Moderator: You got off on a good start. A good grocery list of qualities.

Comment: We have two things we think were basic. The relationship with people both internally and externally. We think these are essential.

Moderator: If there is anybody in the school system that ought to know how that baby works, runs, operates and everything good about it or wrong about it, it's the PR guy; and he can't learn that behind a desk or typewriter or lashed to a printing press or behind a flash bulb or something like that. You can't interpret to somebody else something you don't know yourself. How do you feel?

Comment: One thing that is important is the variety of former experiences that this person has. Be it classroom teaching or working for the press, the kinds of former experiences will lend themselves to effectiveness of PR persons.

Comment: A background in journalism would be helpful as he goes along. He definitely needs to be acquainted with the community. As to the other remarks, we wonder if you don't have a first class person involved, how can one handle all this that has been mentioned? How can one man know all of this? Will you clarify it a little?

Moderator: Here's a brand new question and one I think ought to be asked and answered. We're back to priorities, aren't we?

Comment: My heart bleeds for you. The job of the PR specialist is no different from the rest of us when it comes to an impossible task and we know that. We have to make sure that we surround all of our staff people with sufficient help whether they be clerical help to get the routine sort of task done, and certainly pay the person as much as the job is worth. But as far as accomplishing everything that has been mentioned, as I say that is just one in a long list of many within the administration of the school systems and everybody feels the same way.

It is just one of those things that you have to keep pounding aways at.

Comment: One stumbling block to be pointed out here is no two jobs for a PR person is the same. No two PR people are the same because no two school systems are the same.

Comment: In general we thought the responses very helpful. We would like to add that the person should have human relations sensibility. If possible, the person should come from within the system and be knowledgeable about the total community he is going to serve. We think it would be helpful if that person has had classroom experience.

Moderator: I wondered when we would get to that age old question: "Is your PR person an outsider brought in from the media, trained in communication skills, and if so how can he learn about the school system, or can he learn it as well as someone that comes from within." So where does the PR person come from. From within or without? Recognizing, and I think you will all buy this, that none of us expect to inherit a guy who has both. It will be a learning and developing thing. Do we get a classroom teacher who can also write, but can't get along with the media, but does understand the problems of the classroom teacher? Who's going to answer?

Comment: I don't think you can resolve the question of whether you get somebody from outside or inside. I can say personally, having been from the inside that I think it is easier to get respect from the administrative staff if you have a teaching background. I can see that, but I think you earn your respect. You can be a classroom teacher and walk into this job and fall flat on your face if you don't work at it around the clock. I think that you have to respect otherpeoples' opinions and I think that anyone who comes in has to realize how little

they know and how much they have to rely upon every staff member and work with them very closely. You don't ever tell people we are going to do it this way; you ask them for suggestions and try to involve as many people as possible in what you are doing. By doing this, you get your broad background of support.

Moderator: Thank you very much. That is bound to be the only answer that can be given to that. This is the perpetual question that everybody is asking. We're back again to those human qualities that preceded all these suggestions that you gave me.

Comment: My comment is that if you have someone from within you will continue a program similar to that which you have already established, depending largely on that individual. To change the picture a little bit, an innovating approach is get somebody from outside the system.

Moderator: As the school system gets bigger and the operation gets more sophisticated, you know what the larger school systems do, they have two or three people. That's the answer. You get a media guy to handle the external relationships, an educator to work inside. In the meantime you do it all. You create such a busy atmosphere that the boss says we got to get this guy some help. You create a job. That's how I got help. I stole the switchboard operator first, the boss' secretary second, then I got fired and now I'm a consultant. Comments.

Comments: We feel it doesn't matter whether the person is from the inside or outside, as long as the person can walk on water.

Moderator: Okay. Here's a question on newsletters. Give us more ideas that we might be able to use in getting school personnel to read our newsletter. What are some different techniques that can be used to communicate to both the external and internal groups?

Comment: It depends a great deal on who writes this material. I think one of the important factors is to make it regular, not spasmodic; to think through pretty well the information that you want to include in it, and then write it in such a way that the reader will be as expectant as a small child on Christmas morning. Make it something to look forward to. I think it is the responsibility of every writer of a newsletter to inject thoughts that people will be interested in. It is up to you to sense what the interest is. A few years ago I found myself with a lack of communication to 830 elementary kids. I developed what I called the Monday Morning Newsletter. In this Monday Morning Newsletter that was directed to the kids, I hid a joke or puzzle or something that would challenge them. I think this might be too simple an approach but at the same time there might be something that could be injected in a newsletter to the staff or parents or students that could be vital in establishing communications.

Moderator: I am glad you didn't say staple it to the pay check.

Comment: Should we take a look at what we are asking them to read? My immediate reaction was, how do you know it isn't interesting to them?

Moderator: Thank you. If any of you want to have some fun take Bob Gains Fog Index Formula and measure the grade level readability of your writing. If any of you are interested in how you measure the grade level readability of your writing it is a very simple formula. Write me a note and I'll send you a copy of it, and if you discover that you are sending your staff stuff that only college graduates with a doctorate can understand it's because the average sentence length is 32 to 38 words, etc. We're back to this business of keeping it nice and simple,

make it interesting. Write short, sweet and straight to the point, not down to them but at them. Let not only content but style speak to them.

Comment: It might help if you don't duplicate in a newsletter things that have already happened in staff meetings.

Moderator: Right. You are back again to contents. There are times, however, when it may be necessary to reinforce what happened by saying it again, but just don't go into the whole thing again, that's your point.

Comment: We have a side point. We thought it might help to call the newsletter "Garbage."

Moderator: That's better than Goldenrod Gazette anyway. Sure, I have seen school system newsletters called by all kinds of things, officially.

Give examples of when you plant a rumor or make a formal statement. Okay when do you do that? Or do you, or should you, or do you do both? Or just one or the other? How do you decide which way you get the word out? I'm not sure there is a pat answer to it. You know you do it when the sun is at the Zennith at three o'clock on a third Thursday of every week, you know--

Comment: I'm not sure of just what your purpose in planting a rumor is. It is just general, I mean I don't understand just exactly--

Moderator: Planting rumors or counter rumors to a rumor. Well, maybe this can be simply clarified by an illustration. I did not want to imply this morning, with your permission panel, that you plant a rumor in lieu of any other formal way of communicating. It may well be, however, that there may be times when you want to plant a rumor due to the credibility of the rumor mill and then reinforce it in a day or two

with an official statement. The rumor takes the following effect: I understand, which in fact has been decided, they will not change the attendance area boundaries this year. I plant that one and the next day out it comes to reinforce the decision, because in that particular school district the issuance of a statement was not believed but if the rumor mill had had a one day lead on it, it would have been. That tells you something about the climate of interal communications. I think that is the kind of thing I was referring to. It's very seldom done, nor is it very appropriate to be done; but if it is done, not one in place of the other, but one accompanying the other.

Comment: Don't we really do this all the time? Reliable sources close to the scene report something and out the next day it comes. The reason that that happens is that somebody leaks it and the original official source calls the reporter and tells him to deny it. Then they issue the formal statement. That's why you usually get one and then the other.

Comment: I was thinking about it from a little different standpoint--could you not plant a rumor to take a pulse? In other words, you plant the rumor that this school system is going to the year-round school concept next year. Then you would not issue the formal statement of course until much later, if ever.

Comment: Could you pick another illustration?

Comment: Well, that's the one that came to my mind because of what she said this morning in her topic. You need plenty of time to get feedback from the district, and the feedback you get helps you decide whether or not to go in that direction.

Moderator: Yes, I see your point. You throw out a trail balloon

to see what the reaction is on a less sensitive subject or a very simple subject. Never in the place of the official. Let's face it. I think the trial balloon is a pretty good idea.

Comment: The only disadvantage to a trail balloon would be that if you put it out as a rumor people will say it has already been decided, and lots of people will take the opposite viewpoint or oppose the thing merely because they weren't involved in thinking of it or setting it up.

Moderator: You run that risk. You would have to use it very carefully, with a great deal of discretion.

Question: Have you got some guidelines for the geographic coverage of news for the school system?

Moderator: Do you mean so that one school doesn't get all the coverage?

Comment: No. We wondered how far geographically away from your location do you go with your releases?

Moderator: To the mass media? OK. You let the UPI know in Chicago know and so on.

Comment: I think basically you send your news releases to within your own boundaries, within your school corporation. Those people are the ones most affected by what your news release is going to say.

Comment: But we have a situation where our location and the reading and listening habits of our people involve us in South Bend, La Porte, Chicago, and so on.

Comment: OK. Now I understand your clarification. Thank you. I think then, you sense you are going to have to send it to wherever you have citizens that are concerned about what goes on in your school corporation. If you have a program that affects surrounding counties, then you are

going to have to send it to all counties in your region. Whoever is interested in your school and will affect the program in your school, negatively or affirmatively, you should send news releases to those media.

Comment: There's one companion question to that. How do you find out whether the releases have been used, do you subscribe to all the newspapers to which you send, or do you hire a clipping service. Can this be done within this particular council so that it would be a joint clipping service?

Comment: It depends upon whether or not you have the services of a clipping service.

Comment: Indiana has.

Comment: I know we subscribe to all of the papers, which is a great deal of papers. We want to know what has been written about the school corporation and we clip everything in our own office.

Comment: But if you are going to go far afield, you will have lots of things being said.

Moderator: The clue here is the circulation area or coverage area of the media--

Comment: We were wondering if a clipping service would be advisable. Would it be possible for this particular group to jointly subscribe--

Comment: To jointly subscribe to a clipping service for news from any member school of the council, an interesting angle.

Comment: I think it would be worth exploring for costs and see how much help it could be.

Moderator: How do you involve the local teacher association with your PR program?

We ask that a lot in Michigan, because they have one of their own. Pretty high power. As a matter of fact some of the PR programs of teacher associations are more sophisticated than the school system's in which they are employed.

Comment: It depends upon how many teacher associations you have within your community. My advice to you would be to cover all of them or not cover any of them. If you lose the placement of one of the larger teacher association divisions in your city, and the merchants begin to complain about it; then that is a concern and you are going to be scooped up by every newspaper media in the whole area, even outside the state. I think that the coverage depends a great deal on what you are putting out from your own school system.

Moderator: We can automatically assume that you want to work with them. A whole new topic in itself someday. You will discuss this, I am sure, in Indiana--What is the relationship of the school PR person to the teachers association? Are you management's man or are you a teacher's man or both? In times of negotiations whose side are you on? If you go on managements side, where in fact I am sure you are, as they look at you, what does this do to your ability to communicate effectively internally for the rest of the year? Talk about tightwires, we have some new ones, friends, that we haven't learned to fall off of yet. That's another question that needs more time.

How do you build morale internally?

I am sure that there is no one answer to that or series of answers. The word morale is really climate isn't it, it's believeability. All of the gimmickry, gadgetry, newsletters, and meetings and stuff you go through to communicate internally aren't worth a hill of beans if the climate of

believeability isn't there. That internal communication is based upon an attitude that is established in the day by day relationships of supervisors, principals, and administrators working with staff members. If they don't trust and believe you, then they refer to the central office as the big house. When they throw away things that you sent because they don't trust the so and so, maybe it is best that we don't send them all, maybe it's best that we take a look at the climate out there. I don't want any of us to think, as we do a lot of times, that if you crank up a lot of stuff and get it out that it will help our morale. It may make it worse. So the climate of believeability comes first in the practicing human relationships of supervisor and management with people.

Comment: I think you ought to have provision for feedback. I think you have to be able and I can't stress this too strongly, to hear what your teachers are thinking and let them ask questions and express their opinions freely. It's a two way street.

Moderator: You've not only got to learn how to talk but you have to learn to listen and demonstrate that you can listen.

Comment: I'd like to inject a defensive answer of school administration. My feeling about this is we tend to hear about the issue of morale when somebody is unhappy about something. We need to try to have our finger on the pulse, but the minute a decision is made that somebody down the line disagrees with, then suddenly we hear that the morale is shot, everybody is unhappy. We ought to communicate, keep channels open, let people have freedom of expressions, but by the same token we should not run scared the minute somebody waves a flag of morale.

Comment: If you make a policy and somebody doesn't like it then you have bad morale. Also this morale is pretty complicated from the

standpoint that you can do good things for people and have bad morale. You can make good decisions. To give an illustration, I know some people that could give me a twenty dollar bill and kill me off doing it just because of the attitude they have. I think it's a little more than making decisions and if they don't like it you get morale complaints.

Moderator: I hate to cut this off, because I think we are getting down to the real concerns that plague us all, not just in this study council, but where I come from and where you are about to go back to. All the people that aren't here and ought to be. I would like to make a couple of announcements. I think we owe some gratitude and expressions of appreciation to some people who did an outstanding job here this afternoon. Number one, I think all of us owe a little round of appreciation to those able formulators of the questions that each group came up with, and second, to those volunteer recorders.

WHY SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Dr. Richard Gray, Chairman
Department of Journalism
Indiana University

Whenever I am with a group of public school people I am reminded of an incident that happened in an elementary school recently. It was during the noon hour when the class came back. A little guy slipped down in his seat, pulled his shirt up and stuck his tummy out with his belly button protruding. His rather prim, old maid teacher said, "Johnny, how dare you to do that!"

He said, "Well, the principal told me to."

"Johnny, are you lying again?"

He said, "Nope, I was out on the playground and I had a stomach ache and went to the principal, and he said, "Go back to the class and stick it out until recess, and if it doesn't get better you can go home." If you will stick it out with me and things don't get better, maybe you can go home too.

My topic is, "Why School Public Relations." I would like to open it with a little anecdote from the mass media. As you perhaps know, one of the prime prerequisites of the copy desk editor is to write good headlines, enticing headlines. I used to work on the St. Louis Post Dispatch; and at one juncture they were looking for a new headline writer or a new copy desk editor. They had narrowed the field down to three good men and couldn't make the final decision as to which one should get the job. So they told the managing editor to choose one. He said, "Well that shouldn't

be too hard, I have a little test that I have given over the years."

He called the three men in and had them seated at a table and gave each one a pencil and paper and said, "Now, gentlemen, I want you to write headlines for me; the most enticing headlines that you can."

To the first man he said, "You have four words and four seconds." The man thought and thought and jotted something down and handed it to him. The editor said, "That's very good. That would entice a lot of readers into the pages of the Post Dispatch. He read it, "Nixon leaves republican party."

Then he turned to the second man and said, "Now that's a pretty good headline. You have seen how this is done so we are going to have to make the restrictions harder for you. You have three words and three seconds. The man thought, jotted something down and handed it up. The editor said, "Oh, that's even better. That would entice more readers into the pages of the Post Dispatch. He read it, "Kosygin rejects communism."

Turning to the third man he said, "I don't see how there is much hope for you. If those headlines were true they would be the most enticing headlines of the entire century. Furthermore you have twice seen how this is done so we are going to have to make it even harder for you. You have two words and two seconds." The man immediately jotted something down and handed it up. The editor said, "Oh, you win." He read it, "Pope elopes."

Well, we can expect the unexpected I suppose in today's headlines. Maybe the Pope hasn't eloped yet, but a number of his priests have, and so things are changing the world. I want to talk briefly about some of the changes that are coming over education that demand school public relations and justify expenditures of time, money and effort.

I plan to talk about three major movements in education. First, education has taken on monumental proportions. About one-third of the entire population is engaged full time in American education. Last year we had more than 57 million students, more than 2½ million teachers, more than two hundred thousand administrators for a total of more than 60,000,000 Americans engaged full time in education. In addition to this, I think it would be safe to say that at least another third of the population is directly engaged in education either as parents, school board members, members of boards of trustees, colleges, etc. So as a conservative estimation, two-thirds of our population is very directly effected by what is going on in our education system. Our educational system cost us more than 58 billion dollars last year. Clark Kerr, former president of the University of California has pointed out that we are now spending 29 percent of our gross national product in the knowledge area, which is primarily the educational area. The knowledge area is growing at twice the rate the rest of the national economy. The President of IBM has predicted that within a short time more than half the working force in the U. S. will be engaged in either the production, distribution, or dissemination of facts and knowledge. In short, education has become big business. The knowledge field has become big business. I think that this is proved by the fact that so many of our industrial business companies are turning more and more of their attention to education. They are beginning to develop both the hardware and software for education and are spending millions of dollars to develop it. They realize that education is big business.

The second trend that has overcome education is its monumental social importance. Galbraith has pointed out that the educator and

scientist are replacing the banker and the financier as the two most important components of the American society. I don't think that is really much of an exaggeration. The most important man of the last century was probably the financier, the banker, the industrialist. It seems to me that in this century the educator or scientist has taken over first place. Our society is becoming more and more complex, and as it becomes more complex we depend more and more upon education to lead us through the complexities. The knowledge explosion that has come upon us is of unusual proportions. It is the highest that the world has ever known; the most complex that the world has ever known.

Let's take an index of it. The Books Institution of Santa Barbara, California, has given us a yardstick by which we can measure some of the knowledge explosion that has come upon us. It has taken the period from 1800 to 1900, the 19th Century. If you recall the great advances made in that period, you realize that it was truly the height of enlightenment. A period in which we pride ourselves on the advancements made by mankind in the production of new knowledge. Think of the things that were done in science, in philosophy, in literature and a whole host of areas. We realize that from 1900 to 1950 mankind produced in 50 years what he had produced in the whole period of 1800 to 1900. From 1950 to 1960, this time in ten years, we produced as much new knowledge as we had in the whole 19th Century. From 1960 to 1965, we produced as much new knowledge as we had in the whole period from 1800 to 1900. Today, at the rate of every 3 years, we are producing as much new knowledge as we had in the whole span of the 19th Century.

This has phenomenal implications in the field of education, which is primarily responsible for categorizing this knowledge for the society

at large. More and more our society depends upon education to lead it through the complexities of the society realm in which we find ourselves living.

Does the generation have need for a new manual of intellectural skill? Yes. We look to the schools for answers in those areas. Is patriotism at a new low in American lives? Yes. We look to the school to teach more and better civics. Are we losing the arms race? Sometimes we think so. If so, we put more emphasis on science and math in the schools. Is the crime rate growing? If so, we turn to the schools to teach our children more about morals. Are there racial feelings that are deepening? If so, we'll bus school children from one part of the city to another. Is the VD rate climbing, or is the population exploding? If so, we will have sex education in the schools. Time and time again we turn to the schools to take over important functions formerly executed by other institutions and society.

Indeed, sometimes it seems as if the school is replacing the home and the church in many areas of American life. There are those who don't like the trend, but the trend goes on nevertheless. The school takes up more and more of the child's time, the communities' time, if you like, and it takes on more and more important functions, extremely important social functions. Are things going wrong in the ghetto? If so, we turn to the school for answers. Important social complexities. More and more the school plays a role in all this.

A third important movement or transition that I see in American society is the monumental significance of education to the individual. It seems to me that entrance into the managerial or governing classes, the elite classes or affluent society, if you like, is more and more dependent

upon how well one does in the educational system. It is no longer a matter of wealth, birth, status or property, but largely a matter of academic credentials. Does one have the proper degree from the proper institution, is the criteria that is used to judge whether or not one will be successful in the city at large. In fact, we have taken to putting out schedules showing how much more money per year will be made with each year of higher education. I think this is a rather cheap way of trying to sell higher education. Nevertheless, we have done it and it seems to me that there is an indication that there has been a change in the life of the individual in American society. We have entered a field of techocracy, or technistructure, which is characterized not by property, but by education and by training. The days of the self-made man are ended. In some parts of the United States, even to become a gas station attendant for Standard Oil, one has to have at least 2 years of college on the presupposition that we do not want to hire anybody that cannot move on up into the organization. We don't want to hire men who are going to be grease monkeys or service station attendants forever. So education becomes more and more important to the individual.

Will he go to Vietnam depends upon how well he does in the educational system. How much money will he make depends upon how well he does in the educational system. What will be his social status? What will be his wife's social status? It depends on what college she has gone to, what sorority she has belonged to, what campus she has been on. More and more the significance of the individual depends upon educational systems. With all these transitions, have we done a proper job of explaining these kinds of trends to the public at large? Have we elicited the kind of understanding, the kind of support toward the educational system that

finds itself trying to deal with these complexities and finds itself catapulted towards much more important positions. I think not.

It seems to me that in certain areas we operate as if we are still in the little red schoolhouse. We have all kinds of experts within the educational staff. We have budget officers, building experts, program experts, curriculum experts, dietary experts, and personnel experts. We have all the fronts covered except public relations.

Public Relations is one of the biggest problems we cope with. I think Indiana University is an example of this. We have filled all kinds of chairs within the new administration at Indiana University. We now have vice presidents coming out of every door that you can name with all kinds of titles. We have assistant vice presidents, chancelors and so forth, but we haven't filled one of the most important, and that is Vice President for Public Relations. What is the largest single problem confronting Indiana University today--its public image. Most people judge Indiana University by open visitation. Sex in the dorm is what they equate it with and talk more about the keyroom than about the real educational program of the university. In fact, the average citizen of Indiana judges the educational program on superficial aspects he knows nothing or very little about. He knows nothing about the scientific discoveries that have been made at Indiana University. He knows very little about the role the university has played in the economic well-being of the state. He has very little solid information about the guts of Indiana University. I think you can extend that down.

I am willing to bet the average citizen has very little real understanding about what goes on in the local school district as well. He judges it on superficial aspects, on what he superficially observes when

he comes by the school to pick up his child, or by a story that the child tells when he comes home, or by a rumor that is passed from housewife to housewife. Take sex education in the schools as a primary example. Very little real understanding of this issue but lots and lots of rumor, lots of misunderstanding, misinformation; but do we really cope with problems such as sex education or with financing the schools or with curriculum or with the innovation in the schools in a realistic way, in a way in which we try to bring about real understanding among the public. All too often we do not. In fact, we might ask the question: How many school districts in Indiana have a person who devotes full time to this effort, someone who is professionally qualified to take on this kind of work. I would be willing to bet that the answer would be no more than 4 or 5 school districts in the entire state. How many school districts have qualified part-time persons to handle this kind of problem. I don't know what the answer is but many times we say to the English teacher or the journalism teacher, here write a press release and that will take care of our problem. Or, it's bond issue time so let's get some phamplets, brochures and newspaper stories out and we'll fight a fire until we get this bond issue passed, then we'll forget about the problem until next time around.

I don't think that is good enough for the kind of educational system we have or need to have in our society. I think we are going to have to take some serious looks in this area and try to do something about it. Let's contrast for a moment what problems our society faces, considering education as problems that other kinds of societies face.

The Soviet Union might be a good example. The Soviet Union has made even more dramatic gains in education than we have in the last 50 years. We could take the 3 areas that I spelled out as being important

in our society in regard to education and multiply that by 10 times in the Soviet Union. For example, when Averell Everett Harriman first started going to the Soviet Union more than 50 years ago, at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, he recalls that no more than 10 percent of the people were literate in the states that now constitute Soviet Union. When he went back at the time of the 50th anniversity of the Bolshevik Revolution he reported that more than 75% of the people were literate. In that 50 year period the Soviet Union moved from what was basically an agrarian culture, peasant economy, to one of the world's leading industrial, technical, scientific powers, that outstrips us in missile thrust.

How did this happen in 50 short years? I would argue that it happened because a few men at the top made some basic decisions about education. They decided that they would devote, or the Soviet society would devote the time, the effort, and the money to improve the educational system. A very few men in that kind of society can make that kind of decision and implement it.

In our kind of society it is a much slower process, a much more difficult process. We have to convince local school boards and local voting populations as well as state and national populations and Congress and a host of people who exert different kinds of power, that education is important and that it should have time, effort, money, and good minds dedicated to it. It is a difficult task. It would be much easier to follow the procedure of the closed society, and I am sure many a school superintendent would like to do that, to be able to say this is what we need and we shall have it. But, it isn't quite that simple, as I am sure you are much better aware of than I. The problem is that we have three classes of people. We have those who make things happen, we have those who sit back

and observe things happening, and the vast majority who never really find out what is happening until it is too late. This is exactly what we have to cope with in regard to education. There are too many people who will not wake up to the real importance of education until it is too late, until twenty years after the fact, if we depend upon natural courses to take place.

We have to begin to pry, we have to begin to convince people of the importance of education; that it takes tax dollars to support it; that it takes cooperation from various segments of society to bring about better education; that it takes general understanding. This is going to be the real test of whether or not democracy will survive. Walter Lippman has asked some very crucial questions about democracy in the last 25 years and raised some real doubts about whether democracy can survive, American democracy in particular, in the 20th Century, in the kind of world in which it finds itself. I think that much of the answer depends upon how well education succeeds as to whether or not we can have government of, by and for the people; a government that is based upon the public opinion and free will.

For too long we have been taking the approach of the old county superintendent. I can simplify it by the example of the man in Georgia, who went around the state attending county fairs, meetings here and there, and doing his own little public relations kind of campaign for public schools. He loved to tell the story about the old schoolmarm who was counting out her salary one day, and each time she put down a bill she would lick her thumb. As she counted one off, one of her friends said, "Aren't you afraid you will get germs off that money?"

She said, "No germs could live on my salary."

That's the kind of attitude a lot of superintendents have taken for too long. I think the public is a little tired of hearing about better salaries. They want to know much more than that. At least part of the public wants to know more and all of the public needs to know more about it. They have very little knowledge about modular scheduling, new testing theories, or computer teachings. They know very little about the problems of education in the city ghettos and the rural ghettos. They have very little understanding about new programs in reading, about new math, about new physics, about new chemistry; very little knowledge about what is being done in the field of research in education. The mass media is not particularly enlightening them in these areas because we haven't dealt as educators very intelligently with the mass media.

The mass media tend to report education in the one or two ways. I think this can be exemplified once again by an anecdote. This took place in a small town in Southern Indiana, which was back in the hills and rather remote. This town has a simpleton who was always badgering the individuals with questions. He wandered around having nothing to do. One of his favorite stopping places was the village blacksmith shop, where he irritated the blacksmith something terrible because he was always picking something up and asking assinine questions. One day before he walked in the blacksmith thought, I'm going to get him this time, I'll teach him a lesson; so he pulled a red hot horseshoe out of the fire and put it down on an anvil on the side. Sure enough, the simpleton made a grab for it and dropped it immediately. The blacksmith looked kind of sadistic as he said, "Burned you, didn't it?" The simpleton said, "Hell no, it just don't take me long to look at a horseshoe."

This is the way with the mass media. It doesn't take them long

to look at the red hot horseshoe in American education. They are continually picking them up and dropping them without any kind of continuity and without any kind of real understanding. The coverage of the campus crisis is a primary example.

What have we read about Berkeley, San Francisco State, Wisconsin, Columbia, and Harvard? We have read about how many heads have been bloodied, how many office doors have been broken down, how much destruction. We have read about it as if it were another police report or another fire report. That is not the way to report education. You don't take a man off the police beat or off the fire beat and send him to the campus to report the kind of complex issues that are confronting American education. Rarely do we get insight into what is beneath the kind of superficial aspects of the fester that we see before us, because that takes a different kind of reporting, a much more difficult kind of reporting. I think that the first kind of reporting that I would like to talk about is superficial crisis reporting; just as if it were a war on the campus, or a fire on the campus, or a murder on the campus rather than a systematic approach to education, at the campus level, the secondary level and the elementary level. Let's look beneath the surface and find out what is really going on. What kind of major trends are taking place in American education, what are the real issues and the real problems?

The second kind of reporting that we get is what I would call bulletin board reporting. This is tacking up trivia for the public to look at. We see lots of this--the color of the carnations at the PTA dinner, the list of new appointees at the high school in the fall, the various and summary reports of the new budget. What we are not asking is, are the teachers on that list really qualified to handle the subject

matter that they are assigned? If not, why are they qualified? What's happening in the training of teachers in American education? Why can't we afford to get the people who are really qualified to do what we have hired them to do? Too often it is a kind of trivia, tacking up things that could just as well be put up on community bulletin boards. No real digging. No real in-depth reporting. No real intelligent interpretation to the society of the real guts of education, of the social, intellectual, political impact that education is coming to have in our society.

So the media is partly at fault; but the schools themselves are also at fault. How often do the schools do anything to encourage this kind of reporting? Do the schools take time to build rapport with the mass media? Do superintendents take time to go down and pay a call on the editor of the local newspaper? Do they even know who the news director in the local television station is, other than to get a call on a snowy morning to find out if the school buses are going to run on that day. What do we do to bring people in and to build confidence and understanding over a long period of time? Are we not all too often guility of just before bond issue time, putting on a big campaign trying to get a mileage levy or a bond issue through and then forgetting about the mass media for the rest of the time? Have we done our job of preparing the mass media to do the kind of reporting which is so much needed today? In fact, we can take it back even further than that. We have trained the reporters who are going into the mass media. They are products of our elementary schools, of our colleges. What kind of background have we given them, what kind of understanding in the 12 years that we had them as captive audiences in the public schools? What have we done to give them any kind of understanding about what school is all about? In fact, we could extend that even further.

What have we done in education to give the public at large any kind of understanding of what school is all about so that they will have the intelligence to receive the information and to understand the importance of what they receive?

We teach children about the bakery, about the policeman, about the fireman, about the congressman, about the president, about the judge, about the lawyer. We take him on field trips to all kinds of places. We devote parts of civic courses, but where in the curriculum do we take time to say this is a school and this is what it is all about. This is education. Here are some critical problems in American education. Too many school systems never bother with informing people about what is most important to us and most important to them in their daily life, the things that they are devoting most of their waking hours to--school. We assume that somehow, by osmosis, as a child goes through 12 years of public school, and maybe on into college he has picked up understanding. "It ain't necessarily so," as the song says. In fact, many times he leaves the school system and the campus with negative attitudes rather than positive attitudes; attitudes that we have to fight doubly hard to overcome once he becomes an adult voting citizen who can register that negative attitude at the polls.

What have we done to deal intelligently with teachers in the schools and try to communicate with them? All too often it is one way communication. We talk to teachers, superintendents talk to principals, principals talk to teachers, teachers talk to students and we call it communication, but it's not. It's a kind of authoritorian line, passing down things; and in this day and age of militancy it's outdated, it's no longer working.

What do we do with the public at large? Well, we barrage them, if we do anything, with dull mimeographed publications that we turn out because they mustn't look expensive, they mustn't be engaging in any way. We turn on our best educational jargon so that they won't know what we are talking about because many times we don't know what we are talking about. We make it as complex as we possibly can, in language that only a few other educators could possibly understand. We don't write to the public at large, we write to one another. We do that at the conferences we hold, in the speechs we give, in the publications we turn out; not in simple straight forward language, but in socialogical terms, psychological terms and educational terms that the general public has no concept of.

What do we do when we try to speak to people in the ghetto, we tell them about the programs that we have available for them. We talk to them in white middle class ways. We get the superintendent on a Sunday afternoon TV show, or we have a panel of educators on a radio show, or we get an article or editorial in the newspaper. It reaches the people who already know about these and don't need to take advantage of these opportunities. Not the Negroes, not the poor whites, not the Mexican-Americans, not the American Indians who constitute the ghetto. We don't speak in their language, we don't reach them in effective communication because we are using white middle class avenues and techniques of communication.

Let me sum up with an anecdote once again. I hope all of this doesn't seem overly pessimistic. I think I can exemplify the way I feel by relating a story: Destiny came down to a remote southsea island one day and warned the people of the island that a great tidal wave was coming which would annihilate them. He asked three representative men what each would do. The first was a hedonist and said, "I will eat, drink and make

merry with women all night long, for surely the tidal wave will come upon us tomorrow, and the waters will wash over us and we will all perish. So I should get as much pleasure out of life as possible, before the end."

The second man, who was a mystic, said, "I will take my family and loved ones and go to the tops of the mountains to the sacred groves and pray to the gods for deliverance."

The third man, who loved wisdom, said, "I will search the island over for the very wisest man I can find and we will sit down together and study how to live under water."

Can we not search for the wisest man we can find and learn how to live under water, the water of the social, economic, and psychological tidal waves that threaten to alienate us? I think we can if we make our minds up to do so. Thank you.

REACTIONS TO DR. GRAY'S ADDRESS

Dr. Clarence Robbins, Superintendent
Bartholomew Consolidate Schools

We've covered a lot of territory. It's going to be a little tough to comment on all the items that were raised, but I would like to touch at least on a few.

I think there is no question as to what monumental proportions education has grown in these recent years. This certainly accounts for the fact that much better PR programs are necessary. It is touching the lives of many people in many ways. I think Dr. Gray mentioned two-thirds of the people of our population are directly affected by education, either through actually having children in school, or in some line of work which involves production of materials to be used in education. Certainly all of them are involved in paying taxes and supporting the public education program. He mentioned the matter of significance of education to the individual. I think he is referring here to the fact that getting more and more education is a measure of success; and we as adults, parents and educators have encouraged this and have used this symbol as an indication of success. However, I think we are finding that we are having to reverse this trend a little bit, at least in the guidance and counseling with high school students, because we find that the parents want all of their children to go to the university and colleges, when really in the best interest of our society and these individuals, there is some question as to whether they really should. We are finding at the national level, the state level and the local level considerable interest is being expressed in technical vocational training

and development.

I was very interested in the remarks on the Soviet Union, because I happened to have the opportunity along with Paul Garrison and Harold Hargrave, three in this group, of spending a month in Soviet Union a few years ago, with the express purpose of evaluating their educational system. We did come away with the feeling that tremendous progress had been made in this 50 year period, which he referred. We did come away feeling that we in this country, at least at that point, were considerably ahead of the Soviet Union in terms of educational programs. While they're getting theirs through state edict and direction ours is coming through better understanding of the community and the public. I think we agree that this, in the long run, will be the most successful method of bringing about advancement of the country. I think we concluded that Soviet Union has recognized the importance of education to the success of a nation in terms of world leadership. I think it is up to us, as a democracy, to recognize this fact; and if we are going to continue to be a world leader, we must do even a better job.

We had somewhat of a frightening experience in the sense of recognizing the advances that had been made in the past fifty year period. I think I came away much more dedicated to the task we have to do, in terms of PR, to bring about this understanding and this forward movement which is really important. I am curious at this moment, since he raised a question, how many people in our group here are full time PR people? This represents 19 schools; one, two, three, four, five. There's your five, and I suspect that there are in some of our other school systems, bigger than these, additional full time people. I think we are moving, not quite as fast as we would like to, and I suspect that the rest of the people who are here, or the majority of them, are part time, so this represents 19 of

the 200 plus school systems. Indiana is beginning to recognize the importance of this role, possibly too late, or not too late really, but not moving as rapidly as called for.

I am certainly in agreement with the fact that education is moving so rapidly these days that it is difficult to keep the public up on the terminology and the actual programs that are taking place. We are experiencing this in our own corporation. The problem of how do you keep the public informed on the continuous progress, the flexible scheduling, the programmed learning and modern math. I think we got over that a short time back, but there are many, many things that are reasons why a better PR program is necessary. We are not involving the people to the degree that they can understand, and yet the interest is there.

We are certainly going to find out if we have PR one way or the other. It is like the education of a child; you have learning whether it is positive or negative, whether it is in the direction you want or not. We don't turn education on and off like a faucet and I don't think we turn PR on and off like a faucet. There is PR whether it is positive or negative. I suspect, that unless we do a pretty good job of the positive, we are going to get considerable of the other. I am reminded at this point of a statement, which I suppose many of you have heard if you have listened to Dean Berkely at the University: "That which the public is not up on, they are most likely to be down on." I think that this applies most appropriately to what we are talking about here today. It behooves us to do the very best job we can and assign this responsibility to a person who develops policies which lead to a very positive program for which we can measure results and get the job done.

I certainly would agree with the statement made in regard to the

need for a different kind of reporting, in terms of education, and again typically for the newspaper. The newspaper and press normally do not have persons who are very knowledgeable in the field of education; and therefore, the type of reporting tends to be about the more sensational and unusual. That which we would like to inform the public about: curricular matters, regulations, policies, and direction, just isn't exciting enough to command the space and time we would like them to have. It behooves us not only to work with our press, radio and other news media in terms of bringing them along to a better understanding, but also to find other means of informing our public. I guess the question is, how do we correct this as far as the press and radio are concerned? I think methods have been described in some of our discussions: by having someone assigned and working very closely with these people to try to give them a clearer understanding; being sure that they do sit in on meetings, even the closed or executive session in which they are told to put their pencil down. Let them be involved so that they know the background, so that when one goes into a regular session and action is taken, they will understand what is going on behind the scenes. I expect all of you have had this experience, as you have used the press and radio, that as they become more involved they typically become more interested and more knowledgeable; they begin to get the feel for it; then typically the reporting becomes much better than in the earlier stages.

I certainly would concur with the statement that we probably do not do enough in our curricular program or in our instruction about the role of education in our democratic society. We somehow assume that because a child spends 12 or 13 years in school that by "osmosis" he has learned the values of education and right will win out. This is not true. You have

to have some direct teaching. You have to make your points effective. I know that in this business we say that just because something is good it will predominate in the long run in this very highly competitive world in which we are living. We find that there must be a plan of interpretation if we expect people to make good judgements. We can't assume that because the budget has been made very carefully, based on an educational plan, that it is good and everybody will recognize it at face value and approve it without question. There are just too many competing forces, too many interests that are vying for the tax dollar, and as a result, we have a tremendous job of informing the public as to the merits of not just the expenditures in this year, but the relationship to past budgets and the present need for the personnel, services and materials.

I think the days are gone when the administrator, having been selected by the school board is assumed to know all the answers to all the problems with everyone simply standing out of the way and letting education go merrily on its way. We have recognized here that the progress will depend on public understanding, and that we as educators, if we can evolve the kind of PR programs which will bring the public along with us, can make the advancement down that road much faster and certainly much smoother. It seems to me that we have just scratched the surface here in Indiana, in so far as recognition by boards of education of the need and importance for a PR program. We find still, as I am sure some of you do, that a person and a taxpayer in particular, may raise the very question of selling the program. He may say, "I already own it. I am paying taxes to begin with, why do I have to be sold? You are trying to sell me more than I want to buy." That really is not the point, the point is you must interpret to the citizen what he really is getting and cause him to feel the need for those things which are in his best interest.

VIEWS BY A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Mr. Herbert W. Hoover, Member
Board of School Trustees
Bartholomew Consolidated Schools

Not having heard all those that preceded me today I have the distinct feeling that I am going to put my size 12 in my front cavity. However, this won't be an unusual posture for a school board member, as I am sure you are all aware.

I should state at the outset that I have had little or no direct exposure to the field of public relations neither in business nor as a board member. I must further admit that I have a slight sense of uneasiness when public relation is mentioned, somehow sensing that the public relations man is involved in selling me on or convincing me of something I really don't need or something I should be against. My attitude as a board member, until just recently, was that there was no need for public relations in our system. Our board meetings are open to the public. We are all relatively honest men, diligently working in tandem with our superintendent and teachers to bring better education to Columbus.

Who could misunderstand such noble desires? How could there exist a need for public relations? Needless to say experience has changed my mind. It is my observation that if you are involved in the status quo, there really is no need for public relations. If you are not building new buildings, if you are not negotiating, if you are not wrestling with integration, if you are not hiking taxes, if you are not redistricting, if you are not raising salaries, and if you are not involved in change then

your patrons will support you and there is no need for PR. Lucky is such a school board member if such conditions exists. However, when you start building new buildings, either conventional or Columbus type; when you start changing curriculum or stop giving just A, B, C's; when you start adding blacks to your teaching staff; when you redistrict and start sending upper income children to lower income schools; when you start paying teachers what is almost a respectable wage, that is when you start changing, then you need public relations.

The seven men on our boards simply cannot stand around and talk long enough with taxpayers as individuals and get the job done. I wonder how many of you are in the postion I am in. It takes me at least 20 minutes to make a single bank deposit, 30 minutes to buy toothpaste, and an hour to walk down main street, due to interested patrons wishing to ask questions or present differing views. Golf games and cocktail parties have become verbal jousting matches. There are simply too many people needing explanations and information.

The normal newspaper coverage no longer satisfies the interested mother and father. Not only is PR needed to promote the spread of information and to answer questions, but PR can be put to use to rest rumors and misinformation. Two such cases have shown themselves recently in our community. In one case a man asked the board during negotiation with the teachers, about the rumor that he had heard, that the board had offered the teachers more than the teachers had asked at the beginning of the negotiations. Both the teachers and the board found amusing that the taxpayer was visibly upset over the rumor. A more serious gap was evident in our PR when we hired a black teacher. The point of interest in this particular case is that for some years our board has tried to hire black

teachers with little success. Numerous times we have publicly stated our position. Yet this particular woman lived in our town seven years and did not apply for a teaching position until three other blacks had moved into town and had been hired for this fall. When asked why she had not applied previously for a position, she said that she had "heard" that we did not hire blacks. Obviously our PR with the black segment of the community was non-existent.

In our town we have a newly formed and rather active group known as the Taxpayers Association. Possibly this has caught up with some of you. As you might guess they are rather vocal on all tax rates, and in particular, the high cost of education. Due to their rather popular position against high taxes, it is within the realm of possibility that they might build their own seat in next years election. As a majority of seats are up for grabs, four out of seven, it is also possible that in one swoop this group might gain control of the board. Should this happen, some programs that have taken years to develop might be pruned or eliminated in the rush to reduce taxes. In a mood of reaction our system might be seriously damaged. Obviously, a weapon to counter this is a good PR program that will show the public what might happen to the program should taxes be cut. Or to put it more positively, a good PR program should show the public what they get for their money. The people simply must understand what you and I are about if we are to expect their support.

In summary, the PR program is, to say the least, more helpful to my way of thinking and necessary if boards and administrations are to receive continued support from the tax paying public.

REACTIONS TO MR. HOOVER'S ADDRESS

Mr. Austin Walker, Superintendent
MSD Warren Township

To say the least, I was very impressed with Mr. Hoover's remarks. If we had more of this kind of school board member in the schools in the State of Indiana, we would have far less problems than we do today in almost any phase of the school system. I was quite interested in his first remarks which indicated that if you were status quo, but where do you find such a school system. It is almost impossible to find this, and if you are, that means you are not doing anything in the school system. If there is no change you had better be looking for a new superintendent or a new public relations person or a new school board to get the job done.

I was also impressed with his philosophy of seeing what the job of a PR man was.

Another thing that he discussed, which I think this is of concern to every administrator and superintendent, was the point of the changing complexity of boards because of the lack of public relations. This is a real threat in our schools today. We constantly run into the situation of an unhappy group of people. If we don't, if somebody doesn't do something to change the attitude of this unhappy group of people the total control of the board can swing from the control of one group to the new one coming in. If you are a seven member board on a certain year four of them will change; and if you are a five member board, three of them will change. And so he made a very strong point with me on the desirability of doing a good job in communities of identifying the group that might try to gain

control of the board and then do just what he said. "Change the total complexion of the community." If you have a good program set up, organized and functioning, then Heaven knows, we don't want a complaint group to get in control of our system; because then, probably, a major portion of what has been well planned goes down the drain.

IS ANYBODY LISTENING?

Mr. Ned Hubbell, President
Ned Hubbell and Associates
Public Relations Counselors

Blessed be the school board member who came here this afternoon and said what we have all been going around in cirlces saying, what we didn't realize needed to be said, and taking out all the pedigrees and boiling it down and saying what we are trying to decide in one easy sentence. But if you will remember, Mr. Hoover said that you don't need to organize your PR program if you are not doing any of the following. He made it rather obvious that it is kind of a paramount thing in school systems that we do pay more attention, simply because of the bond issues, and tax levies and negotiations, and district building and integration problems and a grocery list of insurmountable tasks that confront every educator everywhere I have ever been. What he said though is what we should have said all day--we all know it but nobody said it.

You are a change agent, friend. And you just don't do that by issuing an edict, or pretending that everybody knows that the change is about to happen, or wondering why the roof caved in.

I would like to talk about what we started to talk about this morning. My neighbor is a banker, I'm glad for Harry, for one thing he has a job that I can understand, but Harry finds that he can't understand what I do for a living. My wife shares this same concern. Every year when my kids enroll in school they say where does your daddy work? What does your daddy do? He is a public relations man. The kids come home every fall on the

opening day and ask again what I do. My wife carries a card in her purse that defines what public relations is. One day I was watering the lawn and Harry came over and said, "Ned, may I ask you a question? It's none of my business but it's been bugging me. You've lived here two years now and your car's not in the garage when mine is, you seem to be eating regularly and your kids get new shoes. What exactly do you do?" I said, "I am with public relations." He said, "I know that. Let me put it to you this way. In language I can understand, Ned, doctors cure sick people. Lawyers protect ones legal rights. Engineers build things. Architects design things. What do public relations people do?" That's a pretty good question. What public relations people do is what school administrators are being asked to do, due to the change in education, and that is to bring about a better understanding among groups in our society. We're change agents, you and I, whether we like it or not, whether we have volunteered or been drafted for it.

Now if we are change agents there are some things we ought to know about those whom we seek, in the best interest of kids, to change. I had forgotten about all of this until Mr. Hoover said it, so I resurrected some ad lib that I would like to share with you for a moment.

There are some general principles my social science instructors and the psychologists tried to teach me which I wish I would have attended to more carefully when I was in college. There are some general principles of change that Mr. Hoover reminded us of, and alluded to, some general conditions and audience orientations to get people ready and willing to accept new ideas, increased taxes, negotiations, black teachers, intergrated schools, ungraded classrooms, etc. The old days of pronouncing, "this we shall do," doesn't seem somehow to work, at least not with many

of our problems. We forget about the audiences. I was told a long time ago that people tend to change when they have participated in the decision to change, rather than when somebody tells them to. The army learned that during World War I, II, the Civil War, and the Revolutionary War that you just can't march an American platoon off a cliff. They've got to help to make the decision regardless of who is in command. That was the difference apparently between the American army and the German army. People tend to change when they have participated somehow in the decision to change, especially when it is a public institution. That's called involvement now days. It used to be a clique, but not any more. Persons tend to change, my psych teacher told me, when they see others changing; particularly when the change direction is supported by valued persons. That's why we worry about the power structure of our communities, the power structure of the Teachers Association, or the power structure of any organization. We get concerned about who it is that influences others to accept ideas, don't we? We make it a habit to seek them out and work with them. We've learned that people tend to change when they see others, whose opinion they respect, supporting that change.

Persons tend to change according to the degree that they trust the motives of the person or persons attempting to bring about the change. Now we're back to that climate of belief again. All my superintendent told me in my early days was that if there is anything we go to do, it is to convince these people that they got to have confidence in their staff, in their administration, in their board. The climate again.

Persons tend to change according to the degree that they see that change has been beneficial, especially if they are able to gather data for themselves. That's why voters keep saying, "What's in it for me. What's

in it for my kids? Why should we do the new math? How's my kid going to benefit? Draw me a picture somebody. Visualize the results."

Persons tend to change more readily if they are able to influence reciprocally the person or persons who are attempting to influence them. "If I can give you a little of my advice while I'm buying yours, I'll take yours." The old days of rubber stamp citizen committees don't work and never did. We don't want front groups. We've learned that you can't ask somebody for his opinion and then ignore it. He wants to put a little egg in his recipe or your recipe. Instant cake mixers learned that a long time ago. The very first instant cake mix that came on the market was a great product. All you had to do was add water. Just open the box and pour the stuff into a bowl, turn on the faucet, put it in the oven and out came a better cake than the average housewife could make. But it wouldn't sell. They couldn't understand why. They spent a half a million dollars in advertising to target audiences. It was a good product. Vance Peckard, remember the "hidden persuaders"? What did they do when the motivational research boys went out? Checked with people and found out that the housewife felt a little hurt. No creativity at all; making something is an expression of oneself. If she could just put something of herself in there other than water. So they deliberately took an egg out of the recipe, and they put on the box "all you need do is add an egg." And the business of taking an egg, breaking it and dropping it in was what sold that product, because now that housewife is somehow messily involved. See any parallels to citizen committees? They've got to do more than just turn faucets. They've got to somehow add their ideas to those of the school.

Questions tend also to maintain change if there is a public

commitment to that change. And now we're back to the role of the mass media and the letters to the editor. Everybody talking about it, lots of people working on it. When five hundred women have coffee klatches in one town of 35,000, don't you think that says something to everybody? The snowball effect. The more it worked the more it must be right, otherwise they wouldn't get that many people involved. When you and I go out to sell the school district tax levy and can't get anyone to help us, that ought to tell us something. It isn't our problem friend, it is never going to be solved, the issue will never be passed. Sex education will never continue to be taught unless it is the community's concern. Don't you think board members get tired of people coming up to them on the street and saying, "My you have an awful problem." An administrator saying, "My goodness I'm sorry about you and your tax levy."

Whose hurting really? Whose problem is it? It's that town's problem. Those half day sessions, that disgruntled public, those upset kids, those militant schools that are blocked or whatever. Who suffers? the board, yeah. The superintendents, sure. The teachers, admittedly. But who's really suffering the problem? The town. Persons tend to resist change; in varies to the degree that it is imposed upon them. We got to take our public with us. We'll buy that because we're teachers.

A kid can't read until he is ready to read. You don't hit him with algebra in the first grade do you? We got to get concepts in first before we can build on to that point. And when it's time to go to the public, surprise your own school. Don't give me that illustration again. Well people don't like to be surprised, because of these principles that all of us know and some of us forget in the haste of getting around to the business of having to communicate those things that will really bring about change.

I'm not scolding. I'm just reminding myself of what hasn't been said today, that Mr. Hoover said so very well; we're change agents now, more so than ever before, just due to the complexity of our society and the amount of knowledge that exists. This just reaffirms to me the need to get more audiences oriented. I got a friend who works for General Motors and I don't get excited about his product and he doesn't get concerned about mine, but he tells me every year his boss says to him, "I want you to answer three questions. What are you trying to do? (he is a division head) How well are you doing it? How can you do it better?" And that's the self-evaluation he has to go through as a management man. I don't think that's a bad piece of advice. Instead of the column inches, instead of the attendance at the open houses, instead of the yes vote margin at the bond issue. My boss used to feel bad if we didn't pass the bond issue at a two to one majority. Now he will settle for a one vote on a recount. The size of the crowd at the box office is not the barometer of whether we have it with us or not. I think we ought to listen more, not only after we have decided what to say and have said it, to see whether or not they have understood it; before we say something we should have put out trial balloons.

Let me very quickly talk about this scientific thing we all avoid, feedback, because: 1) We don't have time to; 2) We don't have the money; 3) We don't have the skills; 4) Is it really necessary anyway.

I am a believer in listening to people before I decide what to say to them, because I've discovered that I don't know what to say to them until I find out who they are. Last night I had an interesting experience I'll quickly share with you. I'm on a pastoral selection committee at the Congregation Church and we are looking for a new minister. They gave us,

last night in our initial meeting, a sample questionnaire with the kinds of questions ministers ask when they are being interviewed for a new church position. Some of the questions I couldn't answer. Just one of them, I could after that. It said, "What kind of a church are you?" I don't know. What kind of a school system are you? Who says so? Where did they get that idea from? The thing I had to answer last night to this fellow was...Are you a far out liberal, middle of the road, or a conservative. It took us an hour to define those labels. Then he said, "How many members do you have?" The fellow next to me said, fifteen hundred. He said, "How many come to church regularly?" Oh, about three hundred. Then he said, "Well how would you say the membership of your church was divided, what percent are senior citizens, what percent are older couples, what percent are middle-aged couples, what percent are younger married couples, what percent are teenagers, what percent are children?" You know there wasn't anybody on that fifteen man committee that has belonged to that church for years that could answer that question. We decided to call off everything we were doing and go out and find out who we were. We didn't even know our own audience. So we decided to do that first.

I'm audience oriented only because I have discovered that I assume too much. I assume what my troops, our staff, "needs" to know and I tell them because the word "needs", to me, is synomonous with should. Then I have discovered through audience sampling that the word "needs", to them, doesn't mean should. It means want. What they want to know and what I think they should know ought to be blended together in our communication network. I wouldn't issue a printed publication to my staff unless I surveyed them annually to find out audience reaction to that publication. Who is it for anyway? Them. I would periodically, once a year, sample

the questions that come in the first two weeks of school from every switchboard operator and every school secretary we have. Everytime we have a kindergarten enrollment I would evaluate the reactions of the mothers and the teachers and the PTA people who work on that thing.

Did you ever run an evaluation of the orientation of your new teachers? Did you ever ask them? That's a real shocker isn't it? We just went throughout our whole orientation program and started over after we discovered that we were not meeting our needs. We were letting them meet all the administrative staff and we only had seventeen, everybody talked five minutes, it only took 105 minutes. At the end of each speech they said and meant it, "My door is always open," but no one ever came in. That's not what they wanted that day, they had simple little questions like...Where can I get a pediatrician?...Where can I borrow some money until first pay day?... How do I go about getting supplies without bugging my principal cause I'm afraid of him?...How do you live with that guy who cleans the building everyday?...Is there a way to get close to him? etc.,etc., etc. What did we do? We talked about everything that we thought they needed to know and never answered what they wanted to know. So who oriented them? The first teacher they could trust, not the buddy teacher, not the principal, in many cases. We didn't know this. This went on and kept going on because we never knew, we never asked them.

Every election campaign we ran in my town, and we ran them every year to get money to open next year, we would survey our key neighborhoods where the "yes" voters lived, three weeks, two weeks, one week, before the election. We wanted to know, have you gotten the word. Does it look like you are in favor, because if the "yes" voters aren't in favor we might as well call it off. How would you like to go to your superintendent and say,

"Your honor, I think we had better call it off." I did that once and got thrown out. We also surveyed the day after the election. We didn't ask people how they voted anymore. Interestinly enough, when we did, we would find 92 percent of the people after the election always said, "Oh, yes." Ninty-two percent. The vote record said 42 percent, but that's motherhood and I'm in favor of it. We asked them this: "Where did you get your information upon which you made up your mind on how you're going to vote?...What source, newspaper, radio, television, coffee klatch, circular kit brought home, speech you heard at PTA?" Which technique worked best? Why do we keep doing the same thing over and over again without finding out from the audience if it is right, and then next year change your whole strategy for the next campaign. You cut down on the media with apologies to media men and you go work in the neighborhoods more. What happens is when we get this way, we get so darned busy listening that you may think all this guy is is a research man. Yeah, he is a human research man. I think this is the most neglected part of school-community relations, because we have started out filling out one void first, which is a dissemination void. After a little while we realize that messages are passing each other in psychological space. We're sending out lots, we're getting reactions back, but neither seem to have heard the other. I'm a believer in formal opinion surveys, in opinion panels of members at my staff meeting once a month to find out what they hear, what they would like to know more about.

I listen to what people say on the telephone. After every parent-teacher conference, once a year we instruct our classroom teachers in one district to ask each parent if the conference has been fairly positive. Most of them are, but if you got a ventilation thing going it is best not to ask this. We say, if in your judgement you think this parent is willing

to answer this question, ask this one question. We're trying to improve our communications between the school and the home, do you feel that you get enough information about your schools? If they say no, ask them this and it's written right out on the form. What kind of information would you like to know more about? Now if 94 percent of the parents attend parent-teacher conferences, and about 76 percent of the parents were asked that question to which they all responded more or less personally. We tabulate those answers, and this is in November, the first conference period time. Therein Mr. PR director lies the nature of the content of every special feature article, printed publication, radio program when you see categories of concerns being reflected by parents.

Most parents say I would like to know more about the curriculum and you say well what kinds of things; you find categories of things like homework, the new math, the new physics, grouping. They'll give you things you want to know, they'll tell you about things, and that is what tells me what people want to know. That is what I crank out of my communications machine. I'm all done sitting in my office saying, "Good Lord, I've got to put out a staff newsletter tomorrow. We promised them one every other Friday; if we don't put one out they are going to say, what are they up to now." Or it is time to get out the weekly radio show. We got this weekly deadline, what will I put on. I don't believe that anymore.

I'd rather spend 98 percent of my time listening and 2 percent of my time talking, because I think that the 2 percent would be much more effective than if it were just the other way around. It's a matter of examining just what kinds of feedback instruments are used. How would you like to have with you in your school a neighborhood advisory committee?

Let's borrow a leaf from the New York City schools, whether the

centralization in that form is right or not, let's not do it that way, but let's just borrow one little idea. You really want to read a shocker gentlemen, read the total plan, the one that mandates community counciltation when every single decision is made. Let's just borrow part of that idea. Don't shake your head at me, I agree with you, but part of that idea says...How about if from your school we get the principal, you have your faculty select one or two teachers, give us your school custodian and secretary and there is the school staff. Right. Then let's see if the PTA could select for us two or three parents. Maybe they don't even belong to the PTA, haven't paid their fifty-cents, they don't come to meetings anyway, but two or three parents from geographical corners of your attendance district. Now then how about a senior citizen who lives in your neighborhood, who hasn't got any kids in your school; how about the corner grocer across the street, who all he knows about the school is all those dirty kids that drop gum wrappers all over the front of his store. Let's get a mixture of that neighborhood. How about if they meet together, not necessarily in the school, maybe that isn't convenient. Maybe in the church or in back of the neighborhood store, somewhere, somebody's home is even better. Maybe they meet together four or five times a year. For what? Just to take a look at communication that is going on between that neighborhood, that attendance area and that school. Talk about a decentralized PR program, there it is. No minutes, no formal structure, but they are legitimate, and the whole idea has got some merit to it simply because it represents every elementary school of my district.

But if I had 20 neighborhood advisory committees meeting four or five times a year, I've got a cadre of parent and non-parent involvement. If I want to go out and do opinion survey work when it comes bond time issue, they can tell me about that neighborhood. Being a good principal, like I am, I can't get out there like I wish I could. They can tell me, sure there is turnover, sure they all don't come every year, but it's a decentralized program.

Who is the PR director of the school system. The superintendent, designated by the school district's board of education or board of trustees. He's the curriculum director and everthing else, but who are the agents of it---everybody on the staff. What's his job and her job? To teach them how to coordinate their listening skills and get that information back to him, so that they can find out how to support the work they do. They can tell me what people are mumbling faster than anybody I ever met.

I think we need to know not so much about communicating, and that's why I don't quarrel anymore whether the PR person comes from a media or from education. Those qualities of human judgement that say, yes I want to listen, that comes first. You got to want to listen. Secondly, an ability to sift out that evidence that he hears. To seek formal and informal ways and hopefully finance with the boards opinion, those funds that may be necessary to go the whole route with polished formal opinion survey.

I've discovered there are great advantages in asking people for their advice and their questions. Number one they are flattered. As Franklin said years ago, "If you want to make a friend ask him to do something for you." Ask him what he thinks of or doesn't understand, or would like to know more about. They'll tell you, in order to head off and provide for ourselves a preventative communications system.

I'm getting tired of running my finger into the hole of a leaking

dyke. It's sex education this week, and shared time next, and year round schools have been scheduled to blow about October 3, etc. We are just going from crisis to crisis. I think it will always be that way. I think we'll never have enough time to get organized. When you hit on an idea this afternoon, how do we find time to pursue it? I think we have to convince our boss and then earn that responsible right to execute.

Our most important contributions as PR people for school systems is to have a listening post, to teach them and to assist them in how to organize what it is people don't understand and how to listen to people formally and informally, with every mechanism that our sociology teachers can tell us how to use. We must plan a communication program so that we can communicate to people those things we think they should know and those things they tell us they would like to know; and then go back and listen and see if there are any changes of the attitudes. Did we in fact fill in the holes in the information gap?

If the Harry Keelers in your towns ask you PR people...What do you do for a living, say I'm a change agent. What's that mean? I listen a lot, because I've understood that public relations is not publicity or press releases. Public Relations is a four-step process that begins with audience analysis. Which audiences are your most important ones tomorrow, next week, this month, this year? What do they now think of you and where did they get that information from and who do they listen to? Who is influencial in their circle? What newspaper do they buy? What television station do they listen to? Who do they believe in? Audience analysis first. All else follows based on the priorities of our audience; we plan the priority of our time.

Parents are not outsiders anymore, they are insiders always. The

priority of our audiences gets determined by our planning. We will then decide whether to have a staff newsletter once a week stapled to the check or not. A weekly news program, inserts in report cards, neighborhood advisory committees, all of it based on the first step. This we think needs to be done so we'll plan it, then we'll go out and do it. We'll do that part that shows. Having done it, we'll say, ah, wasn't that a good show, didn't we have a nice crowd tonight. No, no, no, let's not evaluate that way. Let's not say, boy, we did a nice job. Let's go out and find out from that neighborhood advisory committee. Do you think this is helping our school any? Do you think we're getting any better? Let's go ask our teachers. Let's go ask those outsiders. Let's ask the news people to tell us. What we're doing here now is just what we did at the beginning, we're evaluating. We're listening again. That's the PR process.

Audience analysis, planning, communicating, and then evaluating all of that communication. What we learn here shapes the planning, and we repeat the cycle. It's kind of like an iceberg: three-fourths of it is under the surface and doesn't show, it doesn't come in the annual report. My board used to say, "What does that guy do for a living?" He's out there snifing, smelling, listening, talking, and planning and evaluating. Three-fourths of that process does not show and it shouldn't. The feedback that he works to get; the planning he comes up with for his whole system and the help he's going to give that principal; the evaluating of the whole communication program doesn't even show. The only parts that shows is the communication itself. That's too often taken for the whole iceberg, that's not public relations. I submit that's what most of us do. As we started, great, good place to start, but it can get better.

That third process will be more effective if it is based on the

first and last one. The awareness of whom do I wish to communicate with? Why? What is it they need to know? How do I know that? Who can help me tell them? My principals, my teachers? What do I need to do to help them and then do it. See if it made any difference. Did it change any attitudes? If not, don't do it anymore; or revise it, improve it or polish it. That's why I don't care where that PR guy comes from. Liz or Dick, I don't care whether he's media or educator. I want him to remind me to be my devil's advocate, a little voice in my ear saying---just a minute, sir, has the administrators met in decision making or the board met in decision making? I hope he's in there; wait a minute before you make that decision, before you make any decision that will require some kind of communication for that decision to be carried out. Let somebody ask you in his little shell-like voice these questions before you decide: Who ought to know that? When should they hear about it? How do you suppose we should reach them? What will we tell them? I'm getting tired of parents coming up to me and saying: "This is all news to me."

The Atlanta School System spent two years with its faculty planning year round schools and told the community it was being done at the end of the second year. We closed the Lincoln Elementary School as it wasn't economically feasible to operate it anymore. We sent out a note saying, "Guess what, mothers, we're going to wrap it up." A lot of good reasons; it's been here since 1888 and the roof caved in. I am here to report to you that this was 1958 and the building still was open. There are fourteen kids in a classroom, that's a limited operation. Whose fault is that? That's ours. Who needed to know we were going to close the Lincoln school---just the kids and the parents, that's all. Who heard last? They did. We have met the enemy and they are us.

I don't think PR men are the ultimate solution to all of these problems. All they do is complicate the waters. Any guy who sits at the decision table and can't make any decision and can't live with it says, "Wait a minute before you do that; who ought to know this, and when do you suppose they ought to know this, and how do you suppose we ought to reach them?" Then he'll make a suggestion on how we ought to tell them in simple, plain, uncluttered prose. He may be worth something to that system, he just might well be. If he is and does it right, he will be worth whatever you pay him. I hope you never read his name in the paper, because there are all kinds of things your district can accomplish if he doesn't care who gets the credit.

I would submit that the time is long past when we are disseminators, when we're after the fact. Here, get this out, we just decided. I think the time has come when as PR people we need to earn the responsible position that is rightfully ours, by our performance. The only way that you can be of value to your superintendent or board members is to be out and polish some feedback techniques and bring them back that information that they desperately need. What do people say? What do people think and how do you know? If you got a grapevine and can get that feed-in, you're going to be working full time. The priorities will be determined because you will become as valuable a man on that staff as they have. It takes a while, but I think it's worth it. God bless you all, it's been a full long day. Thank you.